

# The CLERGY REVIEW

NEW SERIES VOL. XLI No. 11 NOVEMBER 1956

## THE INTERNATIONAL LITURGICAL CONGRESS AT ASSISI

THE "liturgical movement"—the movement inaugurated by S. Pius X and forwarded by Popes Pius XI and XII—to promote a greater knowledge of the Sacred Liturgy among priests and people, that all may take an ever-increasingly active part in the worship of God by the entire Mystical Body, goes from strength to strength. It has been greatly helped by the international liturgical Congresses that have been held of recent years at Maria Laach (1951), Saint Odile (1952), Lugano (1953), and Mont César (Louvain, 1954). There, in ever growing numbers, the lovers of the Liturgy have gathered and, with the help and under the guidance of the world's greatest liturgical experts, studied various aspects of the Liturgy. And from these meetings have gone petitions to the Holy See—which alone is competent to legislate concerning the Liturgy—for the reform of the sacred rites, and suggestions for the promotion of the liturgical movement. These petitions and suggestions have been warmly welcomed by the Holy See and many of them have already received a favourable reply, and borne abundant fruit.

The greatest of all these Congresses has just been held in Assisi (18–22 September) presided over by the highest authority in matters liturgical, the Prefect of the S. Congregation of Rites (Cardinal Gaetano Cicognani), and terminated in Rome by the Pope himself (23 September) with an important address. Evidently, the liturgical movement is not the work of a few crack-brained, over-zealous enthusiasts—as it was once thought to be—but the action of the Church itself under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The Congress at Assisi was truly international. In addition to Cardinal Cicognani four other cardinals took part in it, Cardinals Gerlier (Lyons), Frings (Cologne), De Arriba Y Castro (Tarragona), and Lercaro (Bologna). Cardinal Otta-

viani was prevented from attending, and sent a telegram of apology and of good wishes for the success of the meeting. Ten cardinals sent a representative (van Roey, Mooney, Stritch, Gilroy, Feltn, Luque, Wendel, Léger, de Barros Camara and Arteaga). There were some sixty bishops from Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, England, France, Germany, Holland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Philippine Islands, Spain, Switzerland, United States of America and Wales. There were sixteen abbots, among them the Abbot Primate of the Benedictines, the Abbot General of the Cassinese Congregation, the abbots of Beuron, Hautecombe, Maria Laach, Mondaye, Mont César and Monserrat; while the abbeys of S. André, Maredsous, Postel, Tongerlo and others sent representatives, as did the Priory of Chevetogne. The official British delegation was led by the Archbishop of Birmingham and the Bishop of Menevia, and included Mgr Michael O'Neill, Prebendary Pilkington, Frs Joseph Connelly, John J. Coyne, Joseph Gray and the present writer. There were other priests from England also, such as Canon Burrett, Fr Clifford Howell, S.J., and Fr Illtud Evans, O.P.; Wales was represented also by that veteran of the liturgical movement, Fr Ivor Daniel. The Commonwealth was represented by three priests from Canada and no less than twenty-five from distant Australia. Ireland sent one bishop (Dr McNamee of Ardagh) to represent the Irish hierarchy, and while there was no official Irish delegation, there were several Irish priests including the Prior of Glenstal Abbey (Dom Placid Murray, O.S.B.), the senior dean of Maynooth College (Dr Montague), and that pioneer in Ireland of the pastoral liturgy—the representative of the working parish priest—Fr John Fennelly (Greystones). The United States was, as one would expect from a country where the liturgical movement is very active, well represented by some one hundred priests, among them such well-known liturgical enthusiasts as Mgr Hellriegel and Morrison, Frs Diekmann, O.S.B., Ducey, O.S.B., Ellard, S.J., McManus, O'Connell, Quinn, and Vitry, O.S.B. The representatives of U.S.A. lost their leader by the untimely death of Archbishop—Bishop Edwin O'Hara in Milan on his way to the Congress. South America gave a great backing to the Congress and there were

## INTERNATIONAL LITURGICAL CONGRESS 643

representatives from Argentine, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, Mexico, Paraguay, Puerto Rico, and Venezuela.

Among the "big guns" of the liturgical world who took part in the Congress were Frs Antonelli, O.F.M., Bea, S.J., Bugnini, C.M. (Director of *Ephemerides Liturgicae*), Gy, O.P., Jungmann, S.J., Löw, C.S.S.R., Luykx, O. Praem., Martimort, Wagner.

In all there were, it appears, over 1500 at the Congress, mostly priests but with some seminarians, and a sprinkling of nuns and of lay folk (men and women), including Colonel John K. Ross-Duggan, editor of the American periodical *Amen*.

The congressionists not only discussed the Liturgy but carried it out. Each morning, in the patriarchal basilica of S. Francis, took place, by special permission of the Pope, a "papal chapel". One of the cardinals celebrated pontifical Mass—the votive Mass of the Holy Spirit on the first day, that of the Blessed Sacrament on the second, and the Mass of S. Matthew on 21 September—with the same ceremonial as if the Pope were present in person, the draped but empty throne in the apse being the symbol of his presence. The celebrating cardinal officiated at a faldstool, and attending cardinals carried the train of their cappa magna on their arm, as if in the presence of the Pope. A large number of bishops (in cappa)—with seats in the apse around the papal throne—and many priests (in alb and stole), seated on the west side of the altar, took part in the Mass. The celebrant faced the people at the high altar of the basilica, and the processional cross was used for the altar cross, as in the days of old. The music was plainsong, the whole congregation singing lustily the Order of the Mass. Meantime many private Masses were being celebrated in the crypt around the tomb of S. Francis. In the assembly hall before each morning session of the Congress Terce was sung—using, of course, the text of the new Psalter—and Sext at its close; while None opened each evening session. Vespers were scheduled for the close of each day's proceedings, but as the sessions were unduly prolonged, and those present very weary, this was not carried out.

The lectures of the Congress were delivered in the great hall of the institution "Pro Civitate Christiana" in the Citadella Cristiana of Assisi, and there those present could, by means

of earphones, attached to each seat, hear the addresses in the five languages of the Congress: English, French, German, Italian and Spanish.

The subject of the entire Congress was "Il Rinnovamento Liturgico Pastorale sotto il Pontificato di Pio XII", the restoration of the Liturgy for the care of souls during the pontificate of Pius XII. The standard of the addresses was, as one would expect from such distinguished liturgists, of the very highest order; and emphasis was laid by every speaker on the pastoral aspect of the Sacred Liturgy—its meaning for and impact on the faithful—the theme so dear to the heart of the Holy Father himself.

The first address was one of welcome to the congressionists by Mgr Carlo Rossi, bishop of Biella, President of the Centro di Azione Liturgica of Italy. Then came the very important address of Cardinal Cicognani on the work of the present Holy Father in the restoration of the pastoral Liturgy. His Eminence gave a résumé of the various measures of liturgical reform that had been carried out by Pius XII, very varied in character, but all aiming at one purpose, the restoration of the Liturgy in the lives of the people for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

The special purpose of the Congress was not, the Cardinal said, to hold discussions or submit resolutions to the Holy See, but rather—under the guidance of specialists—to study in greater detail what the Pope had set forth in his famous Encyclical on the Liturgy, *Mediator Dei*, and its effect on the lives of the people. The Cardinal laid special emphasis on the beauty and value of the Latin language in the Roman rite. Following this inaugural address came a speech of welcome from the Mayor of Assisi, Signor Francesco Ardizzone; and a telegram of greeting and loyalty was sent to the Holy Father in the name of the Congress. At the morning session on 19 September a reply from the Pope to the congressional message, sent by Monsignor dell'Acqua, was read. Then came a truly magnificent address—received with marked enthusiasm—by Fr Josef Jungmann, S.J., on the care of souls as the key to the history of the Liturgy. In his paper he traced the story of the active participation of the people in the Church's worship, then of its gradual decline, when a cloud grew up between chancel and



## INTERNATIONAL LITURGICAL CONGRESS 645

nave, and now of the breaking up of that cloud and the restoration of the link between the priest and the faithful, leading to the fuller worship of the entire Mystical Body. This was followed by a paper from Abbot Capelle, of Mont César, Louvain, on the pastoral theology of the Encyclicals "Mystici Corporis" and "Mediator Dei". In the evening session Cardinal Gerlier read a paper on the new bi-lingual rituals, with special reference to those of France, Germany and the United States, and their impact on the care of souls. This was followed by an address from Dr Johannes Wagner (Trier) on liturgical art and the care of souls, in which he emphasized the points that art is the servant not the mistress in the Liturgy, that in church its aim is pastoral, and that the Church admits modern art into her places of worship but on her own terms.

The session began on 20 September with an outstanding address by Fr Agostino Bea, S.J., on the pastoral significance of the Word of God in the Liturgy—dealing with the priest as the minister of the word as well as the minister of the sacrifice. This was followed by a paper from Bishop Wilhelm van Bakkum, Vicar Apostolic of Ruteng (Indonesia) on the liturgical restoration of the Liturgy in the service of the missions, in which he laid stress on the necessity for the use of a living language and of popular rites, such as the offertory procession, in the Liturgy to make it attractive to and acceptable by converts from pagan rites and from a pagan culture. The evening session was occupied by an address of Dom Olivier Rousseau, O.S.B. (Chevetogne), on the pastoral liturgy in the Oriental Rites; and by two papers on theological questions, the first by Bishop Francisco Miranda-Vicente (auxiliary bishop of Toledo) on the significance for theology of the Apostolic Constitution "Sacramentum Ordinis", issued by the Pope in 1947; the second on the pastoral importance of the Apostolic Constitution "Christus Dominus" (on the Eucharistic fast) of 1953, by the coadjutor-archbishop of Toulouse, Mgr Garrone.

After dinner the North American visitors gave a party at the Cenacolo S. Francis for all the English-speaking congressionists to meet one another.

At the morning session of the last day of the Congress in Assisi (21 September) a most interesting paper was read by

Fr Ferdinando Antonelli, O.F.M., Relatore Generale of the S. Congregation of Rites, on the restored *Ordo* of Holy Week, in which he outlined its pastoral purpose, explained some of the criticisms of the Order that had been made by certain Ordinaries because of local difficulties, and suggested some possible minor modifications in the new rites. This was followed by a report—originally prepared by the late Archbishop O'Hara and read to the Congress by Mgr Dworschek—on the celebration of the new *Ordo* in various parts of the United States of America. This statement of the results of the reform of the Holy Week ceremonial was completed by a touching account of its accomplishment within the hostile territory of East Germany, behind the iron curtain, by Bishop Otto Spuelbeck, Apostolic administrator of Meissen, with some suggestions for minor improvements that would help in his diocese.

The last session in Assisi was unexpectedly opened by an eloquent address in Latin by Cardinal Frings. Then came a paper by the bishop of Mainz (Dr Stohr) on the pastoral bearing of the recent Papal encyclical, "*Musicae Sacrae Disciplina*" on sacred music. Cardinal Lercaro—the very popular archbishop of Bologna—gave the final liturgical paper on the simplification of the rubrics of the Breviary, and made a number of practical suggestions for the reform of the Divine Office, especially for its private recitation by the pastoral clergy.

In the absence of Cardinal Cicognani—who had, unhappily, become ill in the course of the Congress—Cardinal Lercaro also delivered the concluding address.

Speculation was rife before and during the Congress on the question of the extension of the use of the vernacular in the Liturgy, not only in parts of the administration of the sacraments and sacramentals—where its utility would be denied by few—but in the Divine Office, and especially in the pre-Mass, for the instructional parts (particularly the biblical readings). This had been asked for at the Lugano Conference. Cardinal Cicognani did not give any definite encouragement to this idea, but while none of the speakers treated *ex professo* of the greater use of a living language in our official services, several did make incidental references in favour of it, and their remarks always drew applause from many of the congressionists. The Pope had

## INTERNATIONAL LITURGICAL CONGRESS 647

something to say on the subject, as we shall see, and no doubt in due time the wisdom of Holy Church, under the guidance of the Divine Spirit, will resolve all doubts about this controversial matter.

The high light of the week's Congress was, of course, the reception of the congressionists by the Holy Father on the evening of Saturday, 22 September. His Holiness—looking amazingly well—was borne into the Hall of the Blessing (which is above the portico of S. Peter's, and from which the newly elected Pope gives his blessing *Urbi et Orbi*) on the *sedia gestatoria*, amid thunderous applause, and, having taken his place at the illuminated throne, delivered an important allocution. His Holiness spoke in French, his discourse being relayed by loud-speakers, and afterwards a copy of the *Osservatore Romano*, containing the full text of his address, and the Italian version of it, was distributed to those present.

His Holiness spoke of the undeniable progress in the past thirty years of the Liturgy, in extension and depth; a progress promoted chiefly by S. Pius X and the Hierarchy, and developed by the zealous labours of liturgists. This progress appeared as a sign of the dispositions of Divine Providence and of a movement of the Holy Spirit in his Church, to bring men into closer touch with the mysteries of the faith, and with the riches of grace, which flow from the active participation of the faithful in the liturgical life.

The Pope remarked that he did not wish to give detailed directives, but rather to treat of some important points at present under discussion in the liturgico-dogmatic field, and this under two headings: the Liturgy and the Church, the Liturgy and our Lord. The Liturgy is a vital function of the whole Church, and not merely of one group or of one definite movement, and aims at the service and glory of God. All contribute to this worship, but especially the Hierarchy, which holds the "deposit of the faith" and "the deposit of grace", whose treasures are dispensed in the Liturgy. The faithful contribute their part also, and so the Liturgy is the work of the entire Church. But it is not the entire work. Side by side with it goes private worship, which—although it is inferior to liturgical worship—the Church fully recognizes and encourages.

The Church exercises through the Liturgy not only her role of teaching but also her right to rule; it belongs to the Popes to regulate divine worship, and to the bishops to see that the laws of the Church concerning it are observed. Priests and people for their part must not in thought or action lapse into narrowness of view or want of understanding.

Under the heading "The Liturgy and our Lord" the Pope dealt with: (a) the action of Christ in the Mass, and that of the celebrant acting in Christ's person; the nature of true concelebration; the action of the Church and those at Mass in offering Christ once he has been made present as victim on the altar by the celebrating priest; (b) the presence of Christ in the Blessed Eucharist—the Pope corrected a certain new theory about the manner of Christ's presence in the Eucharist, pointing out that science must conform to revelation, not vice-versa. He added some remarks on the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament and the relation between the altar and the tabernacle; (c) the infinite and divine majesty of Christ, who while being the mediator between God and men, is himself God.

In conclusion, the Pope made some pregnant observations on the Liturgy in the past and in the present. In regard to the Liturgy, as in many other things, two extreme attitudes must be avoided, a blind attachment and a complete contempt. In the Liturgy are to be found unchangeable elements—a sacred kernel which transcends time—and other elements which are variable, transitory, sometimes even defective. In reference to the past the modern attitude in liturgical circles seems in general quite just. There is research and serious study, and attachment to what is really meritorious, without falling into excess. Here and there, however, appear erroneous ideas and tendencies, resistances, enthusiasms or condemnations, whose actual forms are well known and have been mentioned in the above address. At the present time the Liturgy is leaving on the Church's life—indeed on every religious movement of today—a characteristic impression. In particular, one sees an active and conscious participation in liturgical actions by the faithful. On the Church's part our existing Liturgy demands an anxious care for progress but also a conservative and defensive attitude. She turns to the past without slavishly copying it, and creates some-

thing new in the ceremonies themselves, in the use of the vulgar tongue, in popular chants, in the construction of churches. It should, however, be unnecessary to recall that the Church has grave reasons for firmly maintaining in the Latin rite the absolute obligation on the part of the celebrating priest to use the Latin language; and, likewise, when Gregorian chant accompanies the holy Sacrifice, it must be in the Church's language. At the end of his discourse the Pope used these words: "... the different aspects of the Liturgy today not only arouse our interest, but maintain our vigilance on the alert. Our sincere desire is that the liturgical movement should make progress and we wish to aid it, but it is our duty also to forestall any source of error or danger. It is a consolation and a joy to know that for this we can count on your help and understanding."

For those of us who had the great privilege and happiness of taking part in it the Assisi Congress is indeed a memorable event. We trust, as we believe, that its labours—faithfully reported to the Holy Father, as Cardinal Cicognani promised—will lead to an increasing knowledge, appreciation and love of the Sacred Liturgy on our part; on the part of the Church, in its supreme wisdom, to a continuation of the reform of the rubrics so well begun and to further measures to promote still more the active participation of the people in the worship of the Mystical Body, "the first and indispensable source of the true Christian spirit" (S. Pius X).

J. B. O'CONNELL

---

## THE AGE FOR CONFIRMATION

THIS article must begin with a confession. At the Conference of Ecclesiastical Studies last Easter the suggestion came up of Confirmation at "eleven-plus"; a suggestion made very tentatively by Bishop Beck in *THE CLERGY REVIEW* for October 1955, p. 584. In common with several others present at the Conference I felt strongly inclined to welcome the suggestion, and not even a reading of the articles by Pères L. Durand, R. de Scorraile, Ch. Bouzerand, G. Delcuve, P. Ranwez

P. Galtier and M. Tynan converted me,<sup>1</sup> but they did somewhat shake me and sent me to a study of the sources of the relevant Canons in the Code, to a re-reading of St Thomas, D. de Soto, Toletus, Martène, Suarez and other theologians, and to a review of the earlier teaching about the "seal". These did convert me to the opinion that Confirmation ought to be administered about the age of reason. Fr Michael Tynan is right when he says: "There seems to be little doubt at this stage of canonist disputation over Canon 788 that early Confirmation is in fact the law. In so far, therefore, as the mind of the Church is to be sought in the expression of her laws—and this seems a reasonable proceeding—the mind of the Church is that we should confirm our children, in the ordinary course of events, when they have reached the use of reason" (p. 201). A study of the sources of Canons 788 and 786, and of subsequent explanations given by competent authority, amply justifies Fr Tynan's statement.

*Canon 788*: "Although the administration of the sacrament of Confirmation in the Latin Church is suitably put off until about the age of seven, nevertheless it may be conferred earlier, if the infant is in danger of death or if the minister thinks it expedient for right and serious reasons."

#### SOURCES OF THE CODE

The sources of this Canon, as given in Gasparri's *Fontes*, are as follows:

(1) Benedict XIV, *Eo quamvis tempore*, 4 May 1785, in which he says that Confirmation ought to be administered normally

<sup>1</sup> L. Durand, "L'âge de la Confirmation", *Etudes*, 53 (1891), pp. 421-52.

R. de Scoraille, "L'âge pour la Confirmation", *ibid.* 57 (1892), pp. 141-6.

Ch. Bouzerand, "L'âge de la confirmation", *Maison Dieu*, n. 10.

G. Delcuve, "A Necessity for the Normal Efficacy of Religious Education: Confirmation at the Age of Reason", *Lumen Vitae*, April-September 1950, pp. 304-33.

P. Ranwez, "The Sacrament of Confirmation, builder of the Personality in the Mystical Body of Christ", *ibid.* 1954, pp. 25-7.

P. Galtier, "L'âge de la Confirmation. A propos d'un document récent", *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, 60 (1933), pp. 675-86; P. Galtier rather inclines to a later age.

M. Tynan, "Confirmation at Eleven-Plus? A view from Ireland", *THE CLERGY REVIEW*, April 1956, pp. 201-6.

"at that age when the faithful 'putting away the things of a child' (I Cor. xiii, 11) understand that Baptism and Confirmation differ as much as does birth from growth, and that by Baptism they are received into the Church's army but by Confirmation are strengthened for the fight and assisted by grace to endure the struggle". (*Collectanea S. Congregationis de Propaganda Fide*, 2, Romae, 1843, n. 681, p. 272).

(2) Benedict XIV, *Anno vertente*, 19 June 1750, "but only at an age when the one to be confirmed can mentally grasp the meaning of the sacrament" (*ibid.*, p. 300).

(3) Benedict XIV, *Allatae sunt*, 26 July 1775, refers to "the custom of the Latins which generally demands in those to be confirmed such an age as enables them to know what is right, what is wrong" (*ibid.*, p. 461).

(4) The *Instruction* of the Holy Office, 22 April 1782, forbids Ruthenian priests who may baptize infants of Latins to confirm them. The *Instruction* of 22 April 1896 permits Uniates to administer Baptism and Confirmation at the same time. Neither of these is to our purpose.

(5) The *Instruction* of the Holy Office to the Vicar of the Sandwich Islands, 11 December 1850, the latter having said that he confirmed infants without waiting for the age of reason: "No one is to be confirmed unless he has reached the age of seven; and there must be no departure from this practice of the Latin Church except for reasons clearly serious, for instance, if the infant is in danger of death, or, because of distance, the likelihood that if this occasion is missed there will not be another" (*ibid.*, p. 272).

(6) The answer of the Congregation of the Council to the Bishop of Segovia, 23 April 1774: the Bishop had asked if, because of the large size of the Spanish dioceses and the difficulty of gathering people for Confirmation, it was permissible to confirm everybody without consideration of age. The answer, after pointing out that until the end of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth infants used regularly to be confirmed, says this of the present custom:

"The present practice in the Latin Church is to confirm about the age of seven, under normal circumstances. The Catechism of the Council of Trent, *On the Sacrament of Confirmation*,



tit. *At what age Christians are to be admitted to this Sacrament*, says: 'After Baptism the Sacrament of Confirmation may be administered to all; but until children attain the use of reason, its administration is inexpedient. Wherefore, if it does not seem good to postpone it until the age of twelve, it is most proper to defer this sacrament at least to that of seven.' But although in the Latin Church care has most deliberately been taken to confirm the baptized only at an age at which they are capable of instruction and can appreciate the worth of the divine gift, nevertheless there is no absolute prohibition which makes it impossible to confer the sacrament upon children under the age of seven." Reasons for anticipating the age of seven would be illness, difficulty of access to a bishop in the future, remote residence, difficulty of journey and similar reasons (*Iuris Canonici Fontes*, vol. 6, n. 3788, p. 84).

This decision of the Congregation of the Council was taken over by Propaganda, 4 May 1774, and the same rule was given by Propaganda in an *Instruction* to the Vicar Apostolic of Kuytcheou, 21 March 1851.

(7) Leo XIII, in approving the custom of confirming before first Holy Communion, instituted in his diocese by Mgr Louis Robert, bishop of Marseilles, wrote in his letter "Abrogeant" of 22 June 1897:

"Abolishing a custom which has prevailed for almost a century it has seemed good to you to establish in your diocese that children shall receive in the sacrament of Confirmation the quickening unction of the holy chrism before taking part in the divine banquet of the Eucharist. As you have made known your desire to know if We approve this measure, We are pleased, in a matter of such high importance, to write to you Ourselves, without intermediary, and to tell you what We think.

"Know that We praise your plan very highly. For the practice which has been customary in your diocese and elsewhere does not accord with the ancient and constant discipline of the Church, or with the well-being of the faithful. There are evil passions in germ in the child's soul; if these are not eradicated very early they become gradually stronger, seducing inexperienced hearts and leading them to their downfall. Therefore the faithful need even at the most tender age to be clothed with

that strength from on High which the sacrament of Confirmation is designed to produce. As the Angelic Doctor so justly observes, in this Sacrament the Holy Ghost gives himself in order to fortify us for the warfare of the soul, and in order that we may be advanced spiritually to perfect age. So, when confirmed early, children become more docile in accepting the commandments, they are better able to prepare themselves to receive later the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, and when they receive it they draw more abundant fruits from it.

"For these reasons We earnestly desire that the regulation which you have made be faithfully and always observed." The French, which was the original, is given in *Etudes* 72 (1897), p. 513.

These documents are all that are cited by Gasparri as among the sources of Canon 788. But there is a document issued by the Congregation of the Council, in examining a Provincial Synod, 19 November 1854, which is to our purpose.

(8) "Since for admission to the sacrament of Confirmation far less age is required than for admission to first Holy Communion, as the Roman Catechism says, n. 18, and as Benedict XIV teaches (*de Syn. Dioec.*, Book 7, ch. 10, n. 2), the article, number 22, p. 19, in the Acts of the Synod is proposed for revision, so that Confirmation be conferred first and then at a suitable time first Communion" (*Collectanea*, 2, n. 684, p. 272).

#### INTERPRETATION OF THE CODE

Subsequently to publication of the Code, four answers have been given about the correct understanding of Canon 788, the first of which is included in the second. This is the *Decree* of the Congregation of the Sacraments, issued 30 June 1932, and is of such importance that it may be given here in full:

"Many requests have come to the Pontifical Commission for the authentic interpretation of the Canons of the Code, bearing upon the age of confirmation as spoken of in Canon 788, and asking whether this Canon is a merely directive norm or rather truly prescriptive. The most eminent Fathers of the Pontifical Commission in a plenary session on 7 June 1931, in answer to

the doubt proposed, namely 'Whether Canon 788 should be understood in the sense that the sacrament of Confirmation in the Latin Church cannot be conferred before about the age of seven years, except in the cases mentioned in the Canon' answered in the affirmative [*A.A.S.*, 23 (1931), p. 353].

"Because, however, in Spain and elsewhere, especially in South America, the custom obtains of administering the sacrament of Confirmation to children before the use of reason, even immediately after Baptism, the question came, after the afore-said answer from the Commission for the interpretation of the Code, to the Sacred Congregation of the Sacraments whether this custom could still be observed.

"So in a plenary session of the eminent Fathers of this Sacred Congregation on 27 February 1932, the question was proposed: 'Whether the most ancient custom obtaining in Spain and elsewhere of administering the sacrament of Confirmation to infants before the use of reason could be maintained.' After mature discussion the eminent Fathers answered 'Affirmatively, and according to our intent' (*ad mentem*). The intent is that where the administration of Confirmation can be put off until about the age of seven, and no serious and right reasons, according to Canon 788, exist which justify a contrary custom, the faithful are diligently to be instructed about the common law of the Latin Church, and before the conferring of Confirmation that instruction in catechism should be given which helps so much to improve the minds of children and to make them firmer in Catholic doctrine, as experience teaches.<sup>1</sup>

"From this answer it is possible that a mistake might arise, or a misunderstanding, about the meaning of the sacred Canons and about the precept regarding the age for admission to first Holy Communion. To avoid any such possible mistake or misunderstanding the Sacred Congregation declares: it is indeed more expedient and more in accord with the nature and effects of the sacrament of Confirmation that children should not

<sup>1</sup> The Latin here runs: "Mens est ut, ubi Sacramenti Confirmationis administratio differri potest ad septimum circiter aetatis annum, quin obstant graves et justae causae, ad normam can. 788, contrariam consuetudinem inducentes, fideles sedulo edocendi sunt de lege communi Ecclesiae Latinae, praemissa Sacrae Confirmationis administrationi illa catechesis instructione, quae tantum iuvat ad animos puerorum excolendos et in doctrina catholica solidandos, prout experientia docet."

receive their first Holy Communion before having received the sacrament of Confirmation, which is like the fulfilment (*complementum*) of their Baptism and in which is given the fulness of the Holy Spirit (St Thomas, p. III, quaestio 72, art. 2); nevertheless it must not be thought that children are forbidden to make their first Holy Communion, provided they have reached the age of reason, even though they could not previously receive the sacrament of Confirmation" (*A.A.S.*, 24 (1932), p. 271).

(9) The *Decree* of the Congregation of the Sacraments of 14 September 1946 grants faculties to certain priests to confirm under specified conditions; the Decree stresses the importance of Confirmation and has an incidental remark about the age at which it normally should be given:

"Those who have care of souls, diligent in their office, omit no effort to secure, as far as possible, that all the baptized be duly fortified by this sacrament; and that this be done when they have barely reached the age of reason, that is, about the age of seven years: which age of seven years may be anticipated, as canon 788 expressly says, 'If the infant is in danger of death or if the minister thinks it expedient for right and serious reasons'. Nevertheless, as is plain from accounts provided about this matter, very many children who are more liable to death even long before they attain the use of reason die without being anointed with this holy chrism."<sup>1</sup>

(10) The Commission for the interpretation of the Code 1 July 1952 issued the following answer:

"Whether, having regard to can. 788, a prescription of the Ordinary can be sustained which forbids administration of the sacrament of Confirmation to children until they have attained the age of ten years.

"In the negative."

<sup>1</sup> The Latin: "Quamquam nihil intentatum relinquunt vigiles animarum rectores ut, quantum fieri potest, baptizati omnes hoc sacramento rite muniantur et quidem vix cum ad aetatem rationis participem pervenerint, scilicet circa septennium: quod profecto septennium antevertere licet, prout expresse cavetur canone 788, 'si infans in mortis periculo sit constitutus, vel ministro id expedire ob iustas et graves rationes videatur'; permultos utpote morti magis obnoxios, etiam multo antequam aetatem ratione utentem attigerint, ex hac vita sacro chrismate non delibatos decedere, etc."

This makes it plain that an individual Bishop has not the legal power to fix ten years for the age of Confirmation; but a custom already existing, or a request from the Hierarchy of a province or country, would naturally not be touched by this answer.

“SUFFICIENTLY INSTRUCTED”

Canon 786: “An unbaptized person cannot be validly confirmed; moreover, for lawful and fruitful reception of Confirmation, the recipient ought to be in the state of grace and sufficiently instructed.”

As regards the “sufficiently instructed” the sources of this Canon are the *Eo quavis tempore* of Benedict XIV, cited above, number (1), the *Instruction* to the Vicar of the Sandwich Islands, number (5), and Benedict XIV’s *Etsi minime*, 7 February 1742, whose pertinent part reads as follows:

(11) “Children frequently ask to be admitted to the Sacred Eucharist and to Confirmation, and there are few who do not give evidence of an earnest and almost impatient desire for these sacraments. The Bishop therefore should warn parish priests and expressly order them not to admit to first Holy Communion or to give the written permission (*Schedulam*) to any who are ignorant of the more weighty doctrines of the faith and of the meaning and power of this sacrament; or who have made small progress in their early lessons in religious knowledge, or who fail to come to the instructions which are regularly given to help towards the devout and right reception of this sacrament. In this way due care is had for their early years” (*Opera omnia*, Bullarium, Prati, 1854, 1, p. 138).

(12) The *Instruction* of the Congregation of Propaganda, 4 May 1774, to priests receiving delegation from the Holy See to administer Confirmation contains the following:

“Those who are to be anointed with the sacred chrism ought diligently to be instructed according to the doctrine of the Roman Catechism about the nature, dignity, effects and dispositions needful for fruitful reception of this sacrament. It is likewise fitting that they be taught the fundamentals of the

faith, the ten commandments and the commandments of the Church; let them have by memory acts of faith, hope and charity, the our Father and the Apostles' Creed" (*Collectanea*, n. 666, p. 267).

# OBSERVATIONS ON THESE DOCUMENTS

(1) The *Quam singulari* of St Pius X, issued 8 August 1910, appears to have made no change in the legislation about Confirmation. This laid down the amount of knowledge required for first Holy Communion, and since the Decree of the Congregation of the Sacraments of 30 June 1932, cited number (8), declares that "it is more expedient and more in accord with the nature and effects of the sacrament of Confirmation that children should not receive their first Holy Communion before having received the sacrament of Confirmation", it is clear that, according to the present legislation of the Church, no more religious knowledge is required for the reception of Confirmation than for the first Holy Communion. The Congregation of the Sacraments must have been well aware of what had been laid down by St Pius X about the "age of reason" and what knowledge may be required from a child about the age of seven. St Pius X says:

A. The age of discretion both for confession and for Holy Communion is that at which a child begins to reason, that is, about the seventh year of his age, more or less.

B. For first confession and first Holy Communion there is not required a full and perfect knowledge of Christian doctrine. The child afterwards ought gradually to learn the whole catechism according to his degree of intelligence.

C. The knowledge of religion, which is required in a child for due preparation for first Communion is such as enables him to grasp as far as he can (*pro suo captu*) the mysteries which are "necessary as a means" (*necessitate medii*), and to distinguish the Eucharistic Bread from common and corporeal bread, that he may come to the Holy Eucharist with such devotion as his age permits (*Denzinger*, 2137, 2138, 2139).

(2) A brief but very pregnant commentary is given by

Fr Aguirre on the answer given by the Pontifical Commission for the interpretation of the Code, above number (10), about the good bishop who wished to fix ten years of age for Confirmation. Fr Aguirre says in *Periodica de re morali canonica liturgica*, 42 (1953), pp. 157-8:

"The prescription of the Code (about the age for Confirmation in canon 788), although its wording might not seem so, is nevertheless obligatory, as was declared by the Commission for the interpretation of the Code, 7 June 1931. [Cited number (10).]

"What then is to be said about the prescribed limits of the due age in ordinary circumstances? Giving the usual understanding of the word 'circiter' the administration of Confirmation ought not to be put off beyond the eighth year, in so far as it depends upon the bishop. This is clear from the above-mentioned answer of the S.C. of the Sacraments [n. (10)]. For it is there said that it is more expedient and more in accord with the nature and effects of Confirmation that children should not approach the Holy Table before having received the sacrament of Confirmation which is like the fulfilment (*complementum*) of their Baptism and in which is given the fulness of the Holy Spirit. Now, according to Canon 859, §1, 'all the faithful, of both sexes, after having arrived at years of discretion, i.e. to the use of reason, must once a year, at least at Easter, receive the sacrament of the Eucharist'.

"Putting these two authorities together, it is easy to see that the mind of the legislator is that, as far as it is possible, the administration of the sacrament of Confirmation ought not to be put off much beyond the attainment of the use of reason. Rightly therefore was a decision given against the prohibition by an Ordinary of Confirmation before the age of ten. This prohibition of the Ordinary was doubtless inspired by a sincere desire to fulfil the commendation of the Congregation made in the cited decision that 'administration of Confirmation ought to be preceded by that instruction in catechism which helps so much to improve the minds of children and to make them firmer in Catholic doctrine'. But, *est modus in rebus*; a long delay before Confirmation perhaps will not increase children's desire to acquire solid religious instruction, and creates a danger of neglecting the sacrament; and thus, instead of one evil there



will be two. To keep children for several years from receiving the sacrament of Confirmation does not seem a proportionate or an efficacious means of drawing them to acquire a solid religious instruction."

(3) The wording of the Catechism of the Council of Trent has occasioned some misunderstanding. The text reads: the administration of Confirmation before the use of reason *minus expedit; quare si duodecimus annus non expectandus videatur, usque ad septimum certe hoc sacramentum differre maxime convenit*. L. Durand, in a most useful article in *Etudes*, 53 (1891), p. 428, points out that both Martène and Vitasse take the Catechism of the Council of Trent to approve delay of Confirmation until the age of twelve, and argues convincingly that this is a mistake. He says, in interpretation of these words of the Roman Catechism:

"The age of reason, this is the best time for Confirmation, '*maxime convenit*'; to anticipate this age is less good, '*minus expedit*', but still permissible; to run over this age, for example until twelve years of age, this, *No!*, *non expectandus*. The reader can grasp easily the shades of meaning in the last two phrases. The one indicated something permitted, the other that it is not more than tolerated, to avoid a greater evil."

Durand cites Suarez in support of this interpretation; but considering subsequent legislation, the matter is not of great moment. Durand does not hesitate to attribute to Jansenist influence the tendency in France during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to delay administration of Confirmation, and Père Delcuve, in an article to be cited shortly, follows him in this attribution. In the nineteenth, there is mention of "moralism" and "individualism".

(4) The Instruction of Propaganda in 1774, [*above* n. (12),] seems to demand that the *confirmandi* ought to know by heart acts of faith, hope and charity, the our Father and the Apostles' Creed. This, however, is contrary to a correction made in 1585 to the text of the provincial council of Rheims. The text as sent to Rome prescribed that Confirmation be conferred only upon those who could recite by memory the creed and the our Father; Rome corrected the prescription into an "admonition" to learn these two by heart. Had the standard of education, or of ability to memorize, gone up in two centuries? Or had there been a

growing appreciation of the need of more knowledge? These questions must remain unanswered.

(5) Benedict XIV depends very greatly upon Martène's famous *De antiquis Ecclesiae ritibus*, published in several editions; Benedict does indeed cite some seven or eight theologians who wrote after Martène, but Benedict's passages on Confirmation in *De Synodo* show that Martène was his main source. Thus one of the greatest of liturgists supports the age of about seven as that most proper for Confirmation, and, I conjecture, liturgists generally would tend to agree with him, considering the close unity of the two rites in the ancient Church.

There is no need to cite theologians who are in the fullest agreement with all these declarations of ecclesiastical authority; they belong to all schools of theology and if there is any theologian of weight who advances arguments in favour of delaying Confirmation much beyond the age of seven, I have not found him. Toletus, *d.* 1596, does not hesitate to declare: "I confess I would be pleased if the practice were introduced of not waiting for the use of reason. Conclusion: among those who confirm only adults (he has in mind the Latins as opposed to Orientals) the sacrament should be given immediately after the age of seven, and at the latest at nine or ten; the opposite is an abuse not a custom."

#### THE JUDGEMENT OF AN EDUCATIONALIST

The *Lumen Vitae* is a quarterly review edited at Brussels, by the International Centre for Studies in Religious Education, and the serious and most careful articles which have appeared in it about religious education all over the Catholic world must have aroused the admiration and enlightened the minds of everyone interested in the subject. In the issue for April-September 1950, pp. 305-33, appeared an article entitled:

*A Necessity for the Normal Efficacy of Religious Education:  
Confirmation at the Age of Reason*

Its author is Père George Delcuve, who has been long

associated with the International Centre. Père Delcuve urges psychological as well as theological reasons for the early administration of Confirmation. He advances several considerations which go to show that the age from seven, or even younger, until ten, eleven or twelve is likely to be most critical and most in need of every possible grace. He urges the words of Leo XIII:

"For the practice which has been customary in your diocese and elsewhere *does not accord either with the ancient and constant discipline of the Church, or with the well being of the faithful.* [Italics his.] . . . When confirmed early, children become *more docile in accepting the commandments, they are better able to prepare themselves to receive later the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, and when they receive it they draw more abundant fruits from it.*" [Italics his.]

Père Delcuve regards as lamentable the results of delayed Confirmation:

"The unfortunate results of a delayed administration of Confirmation make themselves felt. Deprived—I purposely say deprived—of Confirmation between the age of reason and that of eleven or twelve, the soul has been spiritually exhausted (if it has remained faithful), or else has lost, if not the sense of, at least interest in God. In the most satisfactory cases, it has acquired a religious knowledge which is the pride of the priest or the catechist. But suppose we look more closely into this knowledge? Does it not happen that a child who has not been baptized is at the head of the class? And then, *normally*, Confirmation being what it is, is it surprising that the adolescent of twelve years old presents himself to the bishop less well prepared than the child of seven? He will have lost in pliability and openness of mind and heart what he has gained in controllable knowledge" (p. 323).

He quotes the Bishop of Puy-en-Velay, speaking to his priests:

"Confirmation is not the sacrament which concludes the catechism instruction, but the sacrament of the age of reason, the special grace of which should help the child 'from inside' during the time of his first religious teaching.

"To those who object that in that case children would not come to the revision catechism classes, Monseigneur answered

that we have no right to divert a sacrament from the end for which it was instituted. Now, our Lord did not institute Confirmation to serve as a sort of prize for perseverance at the catechism, but to help the children from the first steps of their Christian lessons by the interior work of the Holy Spirit with the fulness of His gifts" (p. 328).

Père Delcuve suggests that at the end of schooldays, or at a transference to a higher school, there might well be a ceremony of a solemn profession of faith. He urges, likewise, that many of the arguments used in favour of delay of Confirmation are very similar to those which were urged in favour of delay in admitting to first Holy Communion, which reasons St Pius X rejected very decisively (p. 330).

#### CONCLUSION

My present feeling—for what it is worth—is this: Let us make use of every possible means to maintain our children's faith and to increase their fervour. Let us study, with energy and initiative, every possible method of good teaching and of influencing the hearts of our children. Let us welcome new outlooks and be ready to take risks. Let us institute more study circles, vacation courses, and every possible way of encouraging and helping our teachers upon whose shoulders rests the special responsibility of caring for our children's religious needs. Let us try to enlist the interest and the help of parents, in spite of all discouragements. In short, let us omit no effort which inventive ingenuity and persistent labour can devise.

But, above all, let us trust the guidance which comes to us from the Church. This guidance, as regards the age for Confirmation, is, I confess, far clearer and more definite than I had thought it was, and it has been given to us after long and wide experience. And, as regards the holy sacrament of Confirmation, must we not trust to the Holy Spirit of Christ far more than to the subjective dispositions of the recipients? We do so trust in the case of the sacrament of the Eucharist: is there any less reason to do so in the case of Confirmation?

All our human means are in themselves quite inadequate

## SIN AND REPENTANCE IN THE PSALMS 663

for the task of maintaining and vivifying the faith of our children amidst the multitudinous impacts of the world, which affect the children very early in their reasoning life. Only God's grace can make human effort fruitful—and we know by faith that through the sacrament of Confirmation comes special grace for perseverance in the faith and in the apostolate of the faith; this grace comes as a free gift of God—not through human merits or through human striving, but in the mysterious dispensation of sacramental life. True, the grace is increased according to the devotion of the recipient of sacraments; but, granted essential understanding, what can prove that further knowledge or more striking occasions will make the devotion in reception greater? Even if children do not understand fully—though who of us does understand fully?—the greatness of the gift given in Confirmation, still it is the Holy Ghost himself who acts within the hidden recesses of the mind and heart of the children, impressing His seal and living image more deeply and more strongly, marking them out still more forcibly as his possession, to protect them against the attacks of the world, the flesh and the devil, and to open their understanding and their hearts to the light and the warmth of God.

BERNARD LEEMING, S.J.

---

## SIN AND REPENTANCE IN THE PSALMS

THE Psalms are the prayers of Christ and His Church as they were the prayers of the Chosen People. Although the Psalms were written under the inspiration of God, the psalmists were not deprived of their individuality or personality, and they expressed themselves often very much as children of their day and race. It is well said that every human emotion finds expression in the Psalms—but, of course, with local colouring. Nevertheless since they are prayers or hymns, public or private, and, moreover, inspired by God, they are, in a sense, timeless and of universal application, and the Church has adopted them

and, under the guidance of the same Holy Spirit, has found in them more profound significance than, perhaps, their human authors realized. For example, the familiar verse 7 of Psalm 1, (li), "Behold in iniquity was I born, And in sin did my mother conceive me" is taken to refer to the doctrine of original sin, but it is unlikely that the psalmist had a clear notion of this as it is revealed in the New Testament. This is not to suggest that the reference is not in fact to original sin, but that the psalmist may not have seen it as such, for the inspired writers often said more than they realized, and in order to find out what the psalmist meant when he prayed it is necessary to take into consideration the evidence available from the rest of the Old Testament and other Jewish writings, and from the records of other peoples likely to have influenced the Hebrews, e.g. the Babylonians and the Egyptians.

A comparison between Hebrew and these other writings reveals interesting similarities, but a fundamental difference on the concept of sin deriving, of course, from their respective views of the universe.

There is an ancient Egyptian prayer to the sun god Ra "Punish me not for my sins", and in the *Book of the Dead*—which is really a guide to the underworld—there is a "Negative Confession" to be made by the deceased before the gods, according to which he protests his innocence of certain offences such as theft, deceit, adultery, etc. This book also provides him with other formulas and information to protect him against the dangers of the next life, and, in case he should forget, a copy is buried with him.

There is another Egyptian saying which might have been included in a Psalm, "Reason is the voice of God that is in everybody; happy is he whom it has led to a good course of action". But this seems to mean not "Be good", but "Be clever", for the Egyptian regarded everything as the product of a constant and unchangeable order, and had little or no conception of wrong-doing as an offence against the divinity, nor even a sincere recognition of the moral obligation to do good and avoid evil.

The following extract appears to illustrate a different outlook.

## SIN AND REPENTANCE IN THE PSALMS 665

Against thine opponent work no evil  
Whoso does evil reward him with good.  
Treat thine enemy with justice.  
Give bread to eat; give wine to drink.  
Whoso begs an alms respect and clothe him,  
Thereat his god rejoices;  
That is pleasing to Shamash; he rewards it with good.  
Whoso slanders, whoso speaks evil,  
In retribution Shamash watches for his head.  
Reverence begets prosperity;  
Sacrifice lengthens life  
And prayer remits (the punishment of) sin.

Such lines are reminiscent of the book of Proverbs, but they are taken from Babylonian writings as also are the following lines:

The faults I have committed, I know them not.  
The Lord hath looked on me in the anger of his heart.  
The god in the fury of his heart hath visited me . . .  
I seek (for help); none stretcheth out his hand to me;  
I weep, and lo, there is none beside me.  
I cry and none heareth me.  
Sad, prostrate on the earth, lifting not mine eyes,  
To my merciful god I direct my lamentations.

which may be compared with vv. 13 and 14 of Psalm lxxii (lxxiii):

While in vain have I kept my heart pure,  
And washed my hands in innocence,  
And am smitten every day  
And chastized every morning.

and with vv. 12, 7, and 23 of Psalm xxxvii (xxxviii):

My friends and comrades stand aloof from my affliction,  
And my kinsmen stand afar off.

I am bent, bowed down exceedingly,  
All day long I walk in sorrow.

Make haste to help me, O God my Saviour.



Here are, apparently, similar religious sentiments, and an underlying presupposition that suffering is the result of, or punishment for, sin—whence the problem of the suffering of the innocent. (Incidentally, this problem did not seem to worry the Egyptians.) However, if further comparisons are made, it is clear that, for the Babylonian, sin was not something wrong in itself because an offence against God. Perhaps it would be too much to expect this, since they worshipped a great variety of gods, but "there is no regret for having committed an offence against the gods precisely as such an offence". Their attitude was that of one who has broken a penal law, and whom the gods were now punishing. They did not distinguish between real offences against the moral law and inadvertent mistakes in ritual, or transgressions, known and unknown, of civil laws and local taboos. There is an echo of this in the Old Testament, e.g. Numbers xv, 22-30, and in Leviticus iv, 13ff., where there are prescribed sacrifices for inadvertent faults. Numbers xv, 22-23, reads:

It may be you will neglect one of these commandments through inadvertence; so many has the Lord given to Moses to be handed on to you . . . (Knox).

By the time of our Lord the prescriptions of the Law had been so multiplied that it was practically impossible for the people to keep them, and Pharisaic tendencies recrystallized older notions of sin as something connected with external observance. "In ancient times sin was often the material violation of an interdict. . . . In every case the sin is something quite visible; it is not, in the beginning, described as something inward, nor always as having reference to God."

Even in the Psalms there are glimpses of this point of view, e.g. Psalm xviii (xix), 13:

Who realizes all his errors?  
Hold me guiltless of my unnoticed faults (Knox),

and while it is true that the verse could be applied to spiritual insensibility, that is not the sense of the psalmist. Elsewhere, as

## SIN AND REPENTANCE IN THE PSALMS 667

in Psalm vi, 2, he acknowledges that his misfortune is a punishment:

Yahweh, rebuke me not in Thine anger,  
And chastise me not in Thy wrath,

yet "he clearly regards himself as one of the 'just' and not one of the evil-doers", for in v. 9 he says:

Away from me all ye evil-doers,

so his punishment must be for sins of ignorance.

However, the essential difference between the notion of sin revealed in the Psalms and that revealed in Babylonian literature is best exemplified by the following comparison. If a Babylonian suffered misfortune he went to the exorcizing priest, who performed various magical rites accompanied by an incantation formula. Babylonian as well as Egyptian religion was mixed with superstition, which seems to haunt most religions. "It was the superior knowledge of the priest that enabled him to choose the formula rightly applicable to the case of the sufferer." Of course the list of deities invoked and possible transgressions enumerated aimed at being exhaustive, and the text, from which a few extracts are given, is important as showing the recognized standards of morality and the general attitude to sin.

Has he offended his god, offended his goddess?  
Has he spoken evil?  
Not allowed a prisoner to see the light of day?  
Has he slighted father or mother?  
Has he used a false balance?  
Nor given true money?  
Has he approached his neighbour's wife?  
Has he shed his neighbour's blood?  
Has he robbed his neighbour's garments?  
Has he risen up against one in authority?  
Has he impaired the fame of his city?  
Whatever charm has fallen on him may it be broken.

There follow invocations of many gods and goddesses calling

on them to break the charm and free the sufferer from his afflictions. It will be noticed that there is no expression of sorrow for sin committed, and no expression of determination to avoid it in the future.

Compare the foregoing with the opening verses of Psalm 1, (li):

Be gracious to me, O God, in Thy mercy,  
And in Thy great compassion blot out my offences;  
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,  
And from my sin cleanse me.  
For my offences I myself do know,  
And my sins are before me continually;  
Against Thee alone have I sinned,  
And that which is evil in Thy sight have I done.

Here is confession of guilt, and an acknowledgement of sin as an offence against God. When David was denounced by Nathan for his adultery and murder he said, "I have sinned against the Lord" (II Kings. xii, 13) (Knox). The royal psalmist clearly expresses his sorrow in v. 19:

My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit,  
A heart broken and crushed, O God, Thou wilt not reject.

The difference in point of view is clear, and it leads to different conclusions as to the conditions for forgiveness. The pagan sought to be delivered from his misfortune by appropriate superstitious rite rather than forgiveness for a fault for which he was sorry, whereas the Psalms say:

When I kept silence my bones were wasted  
While I groaned continually;  
For by day and by night  
Thy hand was heavy upon me,  
My vigour was sapped as in the heats of summer.  
My sin I acknowledged to Thee,  
And my iniquity I hid not;  
I said: "I will confess  
My sin to Yahweh";  
And Thou didst pardon the guilt of my sin.  
(Psalm xxxi (xxxii), 3-5),

## SIN AND REPENTANCE IN THE PSALMS 669

and again:

(Since) Thou desirest not a sacrifice,  
And did I offer a holocaust, Thou wouldst not accept.  
(Psalm l (li), 18).

In other words, empty formalities will not suffice; what God wants is "a humble and contrite heart". It is not that God does not want sacrifice. The Law given by God prescribed sacrifices of different kinds including that for sin, and, indeed, elsewhere the Psalmist speaks of going up to the altar of God Who gives him triumphant happiness (Psalm xlii (xliii), 4); and in Psalm xix (xx), 4, he says:

May He remember all thy sacrifices  
And receive thy holocausts with favour,

and in Psalm iv, 5 and 6:

Tremble, and sin no more; take thought, as you lie awake, in the silence of your hearts.

Offer sacrifices with due observance and put your trust in the Lord (Knox).

So far, then, according to the Psalms, sin was seen by the more spiritually minded Jew as essentially an offence against the One True God, for which forgiveness could only be obtained by admission of guilt accompanied by sorrow experienced interiorly—though also manifested exteriorly, e.g. by sacrifice, or as indicated in the following lines:

Ashes are all my food, I drink nothing but what comes to me mingled with my tears (Psalm ci (cii), 10) (Knox),

and,

I am wearied out with sighing; every night tears bedew my bed and drench my pillow (Psalm vi, 7) (Knox).

With regard to the verse just quoted it is difficult to resist the

conclusion that the psalmist's misfortunes have something to do with his grief, for he goes on:

Mine eye is wasted with anguish,  
And (I am) grown old because of all my woes (Psalm vi, 8).

But, of course, that did not exclude sorrow for sin because misfortune was regarded as punishment for sin, in which, as already mentioned, the Hebrew outlook resembled the Egyptian and Babylonian. The sin being punished could be a known transgression of the moral law

—my sin is always before me (Psalm l (li), 5,)—

or an unknown material violation of some prescription of positive law, or, even, not personal sin, but that committed by ancestors; e.g. Psalm xxiv (xxv), 7,

The sins and transgressions of my youth remember not,

can be taken as a reference to faults committed in ignorance, or, as by some, a reference to past waywardness of the whole nation, because, although the Psalm continues, v. 11:

For Thy name's sake Yahweh  
Thou wilt pardon my iniquity, though it be great,

the last two verses read,

Innocence and uprightness shall protect me,  
For I have hoped in Thee (Yahweh)  
O God, redeem Israel from all its woes.

So the psalmist does not seem to be asking pardon for a conscious personal violation of the moral law, but for relief from suffering, by which, through the solidarity of the whole people, and of one generation with another, Israel is being punished for past sins of the nation. Although taking its origin from a tribal organization of society this idea had its justification from

## SIN AND REPENTANCE IN THE PSALMS 671

Mosaic Law, according to which God threatened to punish national apostasy in the following words:

I, thy God, the Lord Almighty, am jealous in my love; be my enemy, and thy children, to the third and fourth generation, shall make amends (Exodus xx, 5) (Knox),

and, of course, the Covenant was made by God with the Chosen People as a whole. It does not mean, however, that the innocent would be punished for the guilty, which erroneous conclusion the cynics among the exiles summed up in the saying,

The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are being set on edge (Jerem. xxxi, 29; Ezech. xviii, 2) (Knox),

a saying which God, through his prophets, forbade. But the idea died hard, and even the Apostles could ask our Lord,

Master, who hath sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind? (John ix, 2).

Nevertheless in spite of, or, perhaps, because of, the connexion presumed to exist between misfortune in this life and sin—for there is no evidence that the psalmist had any idea of retribution hereafter—and because of his conviction of the justness of God, cf.

Thy sentence was deserved, and if Thou art called in question Thou hast right on Thy side" (Psalm l (li), 6) (Knox),

the psalmist is sincere in begging forgiveness for his sins, and he expresses confidence that, because of his sorrow, God has heard his prayer, and has granted forgiveness, of which proof will be speedily forthcoming in relief from his misfortunes, to the discomfiture of his enemies:

. . . For Yahweh has heard the sound of my weeping;  
Yahweh has heard my supplication,  
Yahweh receives my prayer.  
All my enemies shall be confounded and sore troubled,  
They shall turn back in confusion suddenly (Psalm vi, 9-11).

So far the Psalms have shown how advanced were the Jews, under the guidance of God, in the understanding of the nature of sin, compared with other ancient peoples, but perhaps the greatest progress is shown in the following verses:

A clean heart create for me, O God,  
And make new within me a steadfast spirit;  
Cast me not away from Thy presence,  
And Thy holy spirit take not from me.  
Give me back the joy of Thy help,  
And let a generous spirit sustain me;  
I will teach offenders Thy ways,  
And sinners shall return to Thee (Psalm l (li), 12-15).

Here at last is recognition that sin affects a man interiorly, and that an interior renewal by God is necessary as well as His ever present help to enable the sinner to "follow God's ways", that is, to keep God's Law. There is the realization that sin separates from God, Whose friendship the psalmist elsewhere states to be worth more than anything in this life, e.g. Psalm lxxii (lxxiii), 2 and 4:

O God, Thou art my God; how eager my quest for Thee,  
body athirst and soul longing for Thee, like some parched  
wilderness where there is no stream.

To win Thy favour is dearer to me than life itself (Knox),  
or Psalm lxxii (lxxiii), 25:

What else does heaven hold for me but Thyself,  
What crave I on earth but Thy companionship? (Knox).

The point of view thus manifested is altogether more spiritual than that which merely fears God's vengeance—though there is plenty about that too in the Psalms, e.g.

Many are the sorrows of the wicked (Psalm xxxi (xxxii), 10),  
or

Yahweh rebuke me not in Thy fury  
And chastise me not in Thy wrath.



## SIN AND REPENTANCE IN THE PSALMS 673

There is no soundness in my flesh because of Thy anger,  
No health in my bones because of my sin  
(Psalm xxxvii (xxxviii), 2 and 4),

or

Yahweh's face is against the evil-doers  
To cut off their name from the earth  
(Psalm xxxiii (xxxiv), 17).

Yet in spite of the acknowledgement,

For He knows the secrets of the heart (Psalm xliii (xliv), 22),

and in spite of the problem posed in Psalm lxxii (lxxiii), 12 and 13:

Behold these men are wicked  
Yet they are ever at ease, growing in wealth;  
While in vain have I kept my heart pure,  
And washed my hands in innocence,

there is not a single Psalm expressing a sorrow for sin which does not seem to have been aroused by misfortune and suffering. Perhaps for a people to which full revelation had not been granted, especially that of rewards and punishments after death, such was the only way in which men could be brought to their senses and "enter into themselves"—as did the Prodigal Son. Indeed, this parable comes very close to the spirit of the Psalms,

Then he came to himself and said . . . here am I perishing with hunger. I will arise and go to my father and say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee. . . . But while he was a long way off his father saw him and took pity on him (Luke xv, 17-18, 20) (Knox).

The Psalms are full of confidence in, and praise of, the mercy of God, which is "over all His works". No matter how sinful man is—and who is not when even "the angels are not pure in His sight"—he should not hesitate to turn to God.

Master, listen to my voice; let but Thy ears be attentive to the voice that calls on Thee for pardon.

If Thou, Lord, wilt keep a record of our iniquities, Master, who has strength to bear it (Psalm cxxix (cxxx), 2 and 3) (Knox),

What man is there living who can stand guiltless in Thy presence (Psalm cxlii (cxliii), 2) (Knox),

With Thee there is forgiveness. . . .

With the Lord there is mercy (Psalm cxxix (cxxx), 4 and 7) (Knox),

The Lord is gracious and merciful; patient and plenteous in mercy (Psalm cxliv (cxlv), 8) (Douay),

The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart; and He will save the humble of spirit (Psalm xxxiii (xxxiv), 19) (Douay),

Learn of Me for I am meek and humble of heart (Matt. xi, 29) (Douay),

him that cometh to Me I will not cast out (John vi, 37) (Douay).

There will be joy in heaven over one sinner who repents. How close is the spirit of the Psalms to the spirit of the Gospel. They are both the Spirit of God.<sup>1</sup>

W. F. FORRESTER, S. J.

<sup>1</sup> The following works have been consulted:

Garvin, J.: *The Morality of the Hebrews* (C.S.S. "The Old Testament") 1939.

Gelin, A.: *The Key Concepts of the Old Testament* 1955.

Kissane, E. J.: *The Book of Psalms* 1953-54.

Martindale, S. J., C.C.: *The Sweet Singer of Israel* 1941.

Sutcliffe, S. J., E.F.: *The Old Testament and the Future Life* 1946.

Sutcliffe, S. J., E.F.: *Providence and Suffering in the Old and New Testament* 1953.

Considerable use has been made of the last two. The Psalms quoted are taken from Mgr Kissane's translation, unless otherwise indicated.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

## ANGUSTIA LOCI

Can *angustia loci* be pleaded as a canonical cause for a dispensation from matrimonial impediments other than those of consanguinity or affinity? (C.)

## REPLY

S.C.P.F. Instruction, 9 May 1877: "*Angustia loci* sive absoluta sive relativa (ratione tantum oratricis), cum scilicet in loco originis, vel etiam domicilii cognatio feminae ita sit propagata, ut alium paris conditionis, cui nubat, invenire nequeat nisi consanguineum vel affinem, patriam vero deserere sit ei durum."<sup>1</sup>

The wording of this authentic description of *angustia loci* certainly implies that it can be canonically pleaded only for a dispensation from consanguinity or affinity, and indeed only for the female party, but though it was commonly interpreted in this sense by the earlier commentators,<sup>2</sup> there were, from the first, some who admitted exceptions. Thus Ballerini-Palmieri wrote: "Dispensatio quae propter hanc causam petitur, plerumque est in gradibus consanguinitatis aut affinitatis. . . . Sed etsi vir par non reperiatur nisi aut inter coniunctos aut alios alio modo impeditos, ab alio quoque canonico impedimento dispensatio peti posset."<sup>3</sup> The position remains substantially the same among post-Code writers. The majority simply quote or paraphrase the text of the Instruction, leaving it to speak for itself, without either underlining or questioning the implied limitation.<sup>4</sup> Of those who declare or indicate their opinion on

<sup>1</sup> *C.I.C. Fontes*, n. 4890.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Feije, *De Impedimentis et Dispensationibus Matrimonialibus*, Louvain 1893, n. 652.

<sup>3</sup> *Opus Theologicum Morale*, 1892 edition, VI, n. 1366.

<sup>4</sup> Thus Vermeersch, *T.M.*, III, n. 765; Aertnys-Damen, *T.M.*, II, n. 784; Noldin-Schmitt, *T.M.*, III, n. 610; Fanfani, *T.M.*, IV, n. 639; Piscetta-Gennaro, *T.M.*, VI, n. 369; Wouters, *T.M.*, II, n. 811; Genicot-Gortebecke, *T.M.*, II, n. 596; Prümmer, *T.M.*, III, n. 871.

the point at issue, De Smet and Coronata expressly say that *angustia loci* can be pleaded only in regard to the impediments mentioned, and Vlaming-Bender and Amanieu more or less clearly imply the same.<sup>1</sup> Heylen says that it avails only for these impediments "regularly",<sup>2</sup> Regatillo-Zalba use the adverb "maxime",<sup>3</sup> and Martin "surtout".<sup>4</sup>

The possibility of exceptions, implied by these latter, is more explicitly developed by Gasparri. In discussing what may be acceptable as a sufficient reason for a dispensation from mixed religion, he writes: "Causae quae privata commoda magis respiciunt, v.g. aetas superadulta, angustia loci . . . de sensu S. Sedis non facile per se sufficiunt: attamen earundem causarum ratio habetur, dummodo aliae rerum circumstantiae concurrant, quibus illis pondus accrescat."<sup>5</sup> In other words, *angustia loci* can be urged in respect of other impediments than consanguinity or affinity (and even on behalf of the man, provided he is a Catholic<sup>6</sup>), but as a subsidiary reason rather than as a self-sufficient cause. This would seem to be the practical conclusion warranted by the present state of opinion.

#### STERILIZATION PILLS

Mary, a mother of six children by caesarean section, has a bad heart also. Her doctor advises her against another pregnancy and prescribes certain pills which, though still in the experimental stage, are said to have induced temporary sterility in ninety per cent of the cases tested. John, a doctor, says this is plain contraception. James defends it, however, on the ground that the pills merely prolong the sterile period to which, according to accepted Catholic doctrine, conjugal intercourse can be limited for a sufficient reason. Who is right? (P. J.)

<sup>1</sup> De Smet, *De Sponsalibus et Matrimonio*, n. 817; Coronata, *De Sacramentis*, III, n. 163; Vlaming-Bender, *Praelect. Iuris Matrimonii*, p. 316; Amanieu, *Dictionnaire de Droit Canonique*, I, col. 526.

<sup>2</sup> *De Matrimonio*, p. 634.

<sup>3</sup> *T.M. Summa*, III, n. 831.

<sup>4</sup> *Le Mariage*, n. 239.

<sup>5</sup> *De Matrimonio*, I, n. 448.

<sup>6</sup> McCarthy, in *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, April 1954, p. 286.

## REPLY

Declaration of the Holy Office, 24 February 1940: "An licita sit directa sterilizatio, sive perpetua sive temporanea, sive viri sive mulieris? Resp. *Negative* et quidem prohiberi lege naturae, eamque, quoad sterilizationem eugenicam attinet, decreto huius Sacrae Congregationis die 21 Mart. 1931 reprobata iam esse."<sup>1</sup>

If the pills were prescribed for their therapeutic effect and this alone were directly intended (the probable sterilizing effect being foreseen but not directly sought either as an end or as a means), the prescription and its observance by Mary could be justifiable on the principle of the double effect. From the statement of the case, however, it seems evident that the pills are prescribed with the direct intention of rendering Mary sterile during periods of her menstrual cycle in which she would not naturally be sterile. If so, it is clearly a case of direct sterilization of the kind condemned as contrary to the natural law by the above declaration of the Holy Office, in which express mention is made of merely temporary sterilization. Commenting on this declaration, Father Gerald Kelly, S.J., remarks that "it includes procedures which are designed to effect a merely temporary sterilization", and adds that "a recently discussed example of this would be the use of phosphorylated hesperidin".<sup>2</sup> The use of this same drug, "directe ad sterilitatem obtinendam", is likewise declared illicit by Merkelbach-Dantinne.<sup>3</sup> The chemical constitution of the pills used in the present case is not indicated by our correspondent, but it is irrelevant to the solution of the moral problem; what matters is the direct purpose with which they are administered. If this purpose were merely to prevent a particular act of intercourse from resulting in conception, it would perhaps be more accurate to call it contraception, as does John, than direct sterilization;<sup>4</sup> but, from the moral point

<sup>1</sup> A.A.S., 1940, XXXII, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> *Medico-Moral Problems*, Part V, pp. 27-8. For fuller discussion of this procedure he refers the reader to articles by Father John J. Lynch, S.J., in the *Linnæa Quarterly* for August and November, 1953.

<sup>3</sup> *De Castitate et Luxuria* (1955 edition), n. 74.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Tiberghien, *Médecine et Morale*, p. 186.

of view, there is no difference; both are equally contrary to the natural moral law.

It is a mere quibble to say that the pills merely prolong the sterile period to which, under certain conditions, conjugal intercourse may lawfully be restricted. What actually happens is that a period of artificially induced sterility is deliberately added, by direct act and intention, to the period of natural sterility, and this is precisely what is forbidden. The so-called "rhythm method" of birth control simply makes use of nature's own processes; the pill method positively interferes with them, or at least tries to do so. From the moral point of view, there is a difference of kind; the former can be lawful, the latter never.

#### SEX PROBLEMS—PSYCHIATRISTS AND MORALISTS

Baron von Gager, in *The Problem of Onanism*, appears to teach that the sin of self-abuse is seldom formally mortal, owing to failure to realize the objective gravity of the act and lack of the necessary freedom of will, and that penitents who are in this condition need not confess their sin before Holy Communion and should be instructed to this effect by their confessors. I have read a report that the book of the Abbé Oraison, *Vie chrétienne et problèmes de la sexualité*, was condemned for teaching a similar doctrine. If this is so, does the condemnation of the latter apply implicitly to the former? What line should the confessor take? (R. H. B.)

#### REPLY

*S.C.S. Off.*, 3 January 1955: "In generali consensu Supremæ Sacrae Congregationis S. Officii, E. mi ac Rev. mi DD. Cardinales rebus fidei et morum tutandis præpositi, præhabito RR. DD. Consultorum voto, damnarunt atque in Indicem librorum prohibitorum inserendum mandarunt librum qui inscribitur: Marc Oraison, Docteur en Théologie, Docteur en Médecine, *Vie chrétienne et problèmes de la sexualité*, P. Lethielleux, Paris, 1952. Et feria IV, die 3 Aprilis 1953, SS. mus D.N.D.

Pius Divina Providentia Pp. XII, in audientia E. mo ac Rev. mo D. Cardinali Pro-Secretario Sancti Officii concessa, relatum Sibi E. morum Patrum resolutionem adprobavit et confirmavit."<sup>1</sup>

Canon 1399: "Ipso iure prohibentur: 6<sup>o</sup>. Libri . . . qui errores ab Apostolica Sede proscriptos tuentur. . . ."

It will be noted that the condemnation of the Abbé Oraison's book was decided and approved some twenty-one months before the decree was promulgated. We gather from what appears to be a reliable source,<sup>2</sup> that the Holy Office, out of regard for the good intentions of the author, sought at first to avoid a public condemnation, but the book continued to be quoted and recommended, without the necessary reservations, by those who were unaware of its condemnation, and it thus became necessary to publish the decree.

As usual, the decree does not give the reasons for the condemnation, nor have we read the book, but, judging from the above-mentioned report and some reviews,<sup>3</sup> the author tended to base his teaching too much on his medical data and too little on his sound theological principles. His principal error lay apparently in his conception of the elements which determine the morality of the human act. He exaggerated the extension of the *voluntarium imperfectum* and restricted the freedom of the *voluntas exsecutionis*. He gave undue stress to the distinction between the objective and subjective aspects of the moral law and thereby drew misleading and unsound conclusions as to the gravity or otherwise of sins of unchastity. "The inevitable inference from this," says *Theological Studies*, "is that sins of masturbation (p. 98), homosexuality (p. 117, pp. 250-1), fornication and adultery (pp. 195-7), and conjugal onanism (pp. 223-7) must be presumed in the vast majority of cases to be only material mortal sins. Those who commit them should be properly instructed as to their grave malice, and gradually educated to that (rare) stage of sexual maturity where they will no longer occur. But while they continue to occur, the sacraments are not to be refused, and the victims of this

<sup>1</sup> *A.A.S.*, 1955, XLVII, p. 46. The author duly submitted (*ibid.* p. 89).

<sup>2</sup> A note in *L'Ami du Clergé* (which we extracted without noting the date) which quotes the French edition of *Osservatore Romano*, 14 January 1955.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *THE CLERGY REVIEW*, September 1953, p. 566; *Theological Studies*, March 1954, p. 59.

pathology should be instructed that it is permissible to receive Holy Communion after these things happen without first confessing them (e.g. pp. 223, 251); for after all they have not been guilty of formal mortal sin."<sup>1</sup>

We must agree with our correspondent that there are passages in Baron von Gager's book which appear similarly to enlarge the extension of the *voluntarium imperfectum* and of material as against formal mortal sin. Here are some.

"It is not to be denied that self-abuse can be practised with conscious purpose and freedom of will; but I have never come across such a case. . . . A man given to self-abuse . . . is quite unable to grasp the moral weight of what he does; he simply does not realize mortal sin. From my own observation I would say that the majority of those who practise self-abuse or extra-matrimonial intercourse would utterly repudiate the idea that they do anything contrary to the will of God or desire to separate themselves from Him. They are not able to think clearly in this field, so completely is it dominated by the sexual urge. . . . The situation as regards freedom of will is the same" (Mercier Press translation, pp. 90-1).

Moreover, he draws similar conclusions as to pastoral practice, though he hedges them round with reservations designed to safeguard his orthodoxy.

"Importance should be attached to the opinion of those theologians who hold that one should not seek and find mortal sins in every quarter, for they are not easily possible to a Christian who is concerned with God; and on the other hand, one must not make too little of the venial sins, for they too *are* sins—offences against God. In this fashion the door is barred against laxity. . . . If, in a specific instance, the spiritual director, or it may be the penitent himself, arrives at the conviction that this is not a case of mortal sin, but of a more or less serious venial sin, then the logical consequence would be that confession is not obligatory before each Communion, especially in the case of daily Communion. The understanding priest will give his specific permission especially when the penitent is a regular communicant" (pp.

<sup>1</sup> Loc. cit. Written before the condemnation was published, this passage conveys the impact of the book on Fathers Ford and Kelly, S.J., both very willing to use the findings of modern medicine and psychology.



92-3). "The psychotherapist knows a considerable number of onanists<sup>1</sup> in whose cases he would like to suggest to the priest that he might well consider the wisdom of omitting altogether the mention by the penitent of this habit in the confessional, even though the latter inwardly repents. For the continual repetition of the same thing tends to build up a fixation, as well as being discouraging. It might be more advisable to make a point of confessing only when there is *no* sin: 'I do not want you to mention your habit of self-abuse again, until you have succeeded in not doing it at all in the period between two confessions.' This is a little psychological spur, of which one may well make use" (p. 96).

It does not follow, however, from these similarities (if such they are—for our knowledge of Oraison's teaching is second-hand) that the condemnation of the latter's book extends implicitly to von Gagern's. If the Holy Office had specified and condemned a particular doctrine of Oraison and this had been defended in von Gagern's book, there would have been room for the application of canon 1399, 6<sup>o</sup>; but the Holy Office has condemned a book, not a specific doctrine, and such evidence as we have indicates that the reason was a false emphasis and a misleading application of principles, rather than false principles.<sup>2</sup> Nor need we anticipate a similar judgement on von Gagern's book. In the first place, if some of his psychological observations seem exaggerated and his conclusions extreme, they are hedged around with reservations and supplemented by appendices (two of them by competent theologians) in which the disturbed balance of emphasis is largely corrected. Secondly, whereas Oraison wrote as a theologian expounding moral doctrine with the aid of an expert knowledge of psychiatry, von Gagern writes as a psychiatrist with a good layman's interest in pastoral theology. No one is therefore likely to attach an extrinsic authority to his conclusions, especially as they are presented, not as doctrine, but as therapeutical suggestions to

<sup>1</sup> Throughout the quoted translation of the book, the term "onanism" is used to denote self-abuse.

<sup>2</sup> "Abbé Oraison does not deny traditional standards of the objective order of sexual morality. He insistently defends those standards and claims that modern scientific sexology confirms them. . . . But he finds a solution for the sexual crises of Christian conscience by urging to the limit—and beyond—the distinction between material and formal sin" (*Theological Studies*, loc. cit.).

confessors, which he believes to be warranted by his clinical findings. In reviewing his book,<sup>1</sup> we noted the limitations of his therapeutic viewpoint and said that we were "not disposed to accept all his conclusions". That, we imagine, will be the common reaction of confessors.

As to the general attitude which confessors should adopt to the findings of psychiatrists, it is to be hoped that they will weigh them objectively and fairly. The traditional principles of moral and pastoral theology are sound, but our knowledge of the human nature to which they are to be applied is capable of indefinite enlargement, and many of the findings of modern psychology are valid enough to require a re-appraisal of our yardsticks for measuring subjective guilt, especially in the mentally or emotionally abnormal. On the other hand, we should not allow ourselves to be bemused by the aura of esoteric wisdom which surrounds the pronouncements of modern psychiatrists. Their knowledge of human nature is gathered largely from their clinical experience, and it is the abnormal rather than the normal man that frequents their clinics. The experience of the confessional is wider and more varied, and if the confessor is a man of sound theological knowledge and good sense, his judgement of subjective guilt is likely, except perhaps in pathological cases, to be every bit as reliable as that of the psychiatrist. The cure of the *psyche* is helpful to, but no substitute for, the cure of the soul.

L. L. McR.

#### DEDICATION OF A CHILD TO OUR LADY

Some parents bring their babies to the priest to be dedicated to our Lady. Is there a special form appointed for this and may it be used by a secular priest? (Pastor.)

#### REPLY

This pious practice is entirely an extra-liturgical act, an act

<sup>1</sup> THE CLERGY REVIEW, May 1955, pp. 295-7.

of private devotion, and, in this country, there is no official rite for its performance. Some local rituals in France and Belgium—where the practice is common—have a form of dedication, and since the appearance of the new Latin-French Ritual in 1948, a form has been approved for all the dioceses of France.<sup>1</sup> The dedication takes place at the altar of our Lady after baptism. All present recite *Ave Maria*; the parents, kneeling, recite the prayer given in the ritual; the priest recites two versicles and a prayer;<sup>2</sup> and the function ends with the singing of the *Salve Regina*, or the *Magnificat*. It would be preferable if the liturgical *Benedictio Pueri* (Roman Ritual, IX, iv, 3) formed part of the rite and the priest might add the prayer *Pro Familia*. While the liturgical part of the rite must be carried out in Latin (but a translation should be added for the benefit of those present), obviously, if the parents read the prayer of dedication<sup>3</sup> it must be in English in a form approved by the Ordinary (for a ceremony in the church). Here is an English version of the beautiful form of dedication used in the diocese of Liège: "O Mary, chosen to be the mother of the infant God and to guide his first steps, take under thy care this child whom we confide to thy maternal protection. Preserve him (her) from all dangers of soul and body. Give him (her) an understanding of the things of God and a will to follow them, that under thy care he (she) may be faithful to thy Divine Son, in whom he (she) has been baptized, and may reach life eternal. Amen."

In France it is the practice to lay the child on our Lady's altar. This is not a becoming practice, and, if the altar at which the dedication takes place is a real altar, and not merely a pedestal, is forbidden. "Caveat" says the Roman Ritual at the beginning of the Title on blessings (IX, i, 9), "ne benedictionis causa ponat aliquid indecens super altare."

Of course any priest may use a form of dedication, which must, however, be approved by the Ordinary, if it is to be used publicly in the church. The dedication of a child to our Lady is not reserved to Religious.

<sup>1</sup> The famous *Missel Quotidien* (Fedor) published in 1952 has (p. 1592) a different form.

<sup>2</sup> No. 8 of the *Orationes Diversae* of the Missal.

<sup>3</sup> Of course it may be read by the priest,

## A DOCTOR'S BIRETTA

What is a doctor's biretta and when is it used? (J. R.)

## REPLY

A doctor's biretta—more correctly styled a doctor's cap—has the form of a biretta with four horns or peaks. It is not an ecclesiastical headdress, but an academical badge of one who has gained a doctor's degree in philosophy, theology, law, etc. The doctoral biretta given by the Roman universities is of plain black silk. Some other universities have adopted different designs for this cap. Thus Louvain University uses a black biretta, with a tuft of the colour proper to each department of science. The doctors of theology of the Catholic University of America wear a biretta of black velvet with red silk lining, trimmings and tuft. The doctor's biretta, not being a liturgical ornament, may not be worn at any church function, not even by a bishop (*S.R.C.*, 2877, 3873<sup>5</sup>). It may be used only at academic functions, or, e.g., when lecturing.

J. B. O'C.

## ROMAN DOCUMENT

## EYE-DONORS

## PAPAL ALLOCUTION

*Dirigentibus ac Sociis Sodalitatis Italicae oblatores "corneae" et Unionis Italicae caecorum necnon praeclaris medicis mentem Summi Pontificis quaerentibus circa quosdam medentium interventus in auxilium caecorum.*<sup>1</sup> (*A.A.S.*, 1956, XLVIII, p. 459).

Vous Nous avez demandé, Messieurs, un mot d'orientation, d'approbation et d'encouragement pour votre Association qui veut

<sup>1</sup> Habita die 14 Maii mensis a. 1956.

aider les aveugles, et ceux dont la fonction visuelle est atteinte, au moyen des ressources techniques et scientifiques de la chirurgie moderne. C'est bien volontiers que Nous traitons dans cette brève allocution du but que vous vous proposez.

La documentation abondante, que vous Nous avez procurée, dépasse de loin le thème précis, que Nous avons l'intention de développer. Elle concerne l'ensemble du problème, de jour en jour plus aigu, de la transplantation de tissus d'une personne à l'autre, selon ses divers aspects biologique et médical, technique et chirurgical, juridique, moral et religieux. Nous nous limitons aux aspects religieux et moraux de la transplantation de la cornée, non entre des hommes vivants (de celle-ci Nous ne parlerons pas aujourd'hui), mais du corps mort sur le vivant. Nous serons toutefois obligé de déborder ce cadre étroit pour parler de quelques opinions, que Nous avons rencontrées à cette occasion.

Nous avons examiné les divers rapports que vous Nous avez communiqués; par leur objectivité, leur sobriété, leur précision scientifique, les explications qu'ils donnent sur les présupposés nécessaires d'une transplantation de la cornée, sur son diagnostic et son pronostic, ont fait sur Nous une profonde impression.

Avant d'aborder le thème proprement dit, qu'il Nous soit permis de faire deux remarques plus générales. La "terminologie", que nous avons trouvée dans les rapports et dans les textes imprimés, distingue "autoinnesto", ou autogreffe, transferts de tissus d'une partie à l'autre du corps d'un seul et même individu; "omoinnesto", ou homogreffe, transferts de tissus d'un individu à un autre de la même espèce (c'est-à-dire ici d'homme à homme); "eteroinnesto", ou hétérogreffe, transferts de tissus entre deux individus d'espèces différentes (c'est-à-dire ici entre un animal et un organisme humain). Ce dernier cas appelle quelques précisions du point de vue religieux et moral. On ne peut pas dire que toute transplantation de tissus (biologiquement possible) entre individus d'espèces différentes soit moralement condamnable; mais il est encore moins vrai qu'aucune transplantation hétérogène biologiquement possible ne soit interdite ou ne puisse soulever d'objection. Il faut distinguer d'après les cas et voir quel tissu ou quel organe il s'agit de planter. La transplantation de glandes sexuelles animales sur l'homme est à rejeter comme immorale; par contre la transplantation de la cornée d'un organisme non-humain à un organisme humain ne soulèverait aucune difficulté morale, si elle était biologiquement possible et indiquée. Si l'on voulait fonder sur la diversité des espèces l'interdiction morale absolue de la transplantation, il faudrait en bonne logique déclarer immorale la thérapie

cellulaire, qui se pratique actuellement avec une fréquence croissante; on emprunte souvent des cellules vivantes à un organisme non-humain pour les transplanter dans un organisme humain, où elles exercent leur action.

Nous avons trouvé aussi dans les explications *terminologiques* de l'ouvrage imprimé le plus récent une remarque, qui concerne le thème même de Notre présente allocution. On y précise que l'expression "*innesto*", utilisée pour désigner le transfert de parties d'un corps mort à un homme vivant, est inexacte et employée improprement. Le texte porte: "Impropriamente, viene chiamato '*innesto*' anche l'impiego di tessuti '*fissati*' (morti e conservati); mentre sarebbe più esatto parlare di '*impianto*' o di '*inclusione*' di un tessuto morto in un tessuto vivente." Il vous appartient d'apprécier cet avis au point de vue médical; au point de vue philosophique et théologique la critique est justifiée. Le transfert d'un tissu ou d'un organe d'un mort à un vivant n'est pas transfert d'homme à homme; le mort *était* un homme, mais il ne *est* plus.

Nous avons relevé aussi dans la documentation imprimée une autre remarque, qui prête à confusion et que Nous estimons devoir rectifier. Pour démontrer que l'extirpation d'organes nécessaires à la transplantation faite d'un vivant à l'autre est conforme à la nature et licite, on la met sur le même pied que celle d'un organe physique déterminé faite dans l'intérêt d'un organisme physique total. Les membres de l'individu seraient considérés ici comme parties et membres de l'organisme total que constitue l'"humanité", de la même manière—ou presque—qu'ils sont parties de l'organisme individuel de l'homme. On argumente alors en disant que, s'il est permis, en cas de nécessité, de sacrifier un membre particulier (main, pied, œil, oreille, rein, glande sexuelle) à l'organisme de l'"homme", il serait également permis de sacrifier tel membre particulier à l'organisme "humanité" (dans la personne d'un de ses membres malade et souffrant). Le but que vise cette argumentation, remédier au mal d'autrui, ou du moins l'adoucir, est compréhensible, et louable, mais la méthode proposée, et la preuve dont on l'appuie, sont erronées. On néglige ici la différence essentielle entre un organisme physique et un organisme moral, ainsi que la différence qualitative essentielle entre les relations des parties avec le tout dans ces deux types d'organismes. L'organisme physique de l'"homme" est un tout quant à l'être; les membres sont des parties unies et reliées entre elles quant à l'être physique même; ils sont tellement absorbés par le tout, qu'ils ne possèdent aucune indépendance, ils n'existent que pour l'organisme total et n'ont d'autre fin que la sienne. Il en va tout autrement pour l'organisme moral qu'est

l'humanité. Celui-ci ne constitue un tout que quant à l'agir et à la finalité; les individus, en tant que membres de cet organisme ne sont que des parties fonctionnelles; le "tout" ne peut donc poser à leur égard que des exigences concernant l'ordre de l'action. Quant à leur être physique les individus ne sont en aucune façon dépendants les uns des autres ni de l'humanité; l'évidence immédiate et le bon sens démontrent la fausseté de l'assertion contraire. Pour cette raison l'organisme total, qu'est l'humanité, n'a aucun droit de poser aux individus des exigences dans le domaine de l'être physique, en vertu du droit de nature qu'a le "tout" de disposer des parties. L'extirpation d'un organe particulier serait un cas d'intervention directe, non seulement sur la sphère d'action de l'individu, mais aussi et principalement sur celle de son être, de la part d'un "tout" purement fonctionnel: "humanité", "société", "Etat", auquel l'individu humain est incorporé comme membre fonctionnel et quant à l'agir seulement. Dans un tout autre contexte, Nous avons déjà souligné auparavant le sens et l'importance de cette considération et rappelé la distinction nécessaire, dont il faut soigneusement tenir compte, entre l'organisme physique et l'organisme moral. C'était dans Notre Encyclique du 29 juin 1943 sur le "Corps mystique du Christ". Nous résumions alors ce que Nous venons de dire en quelques phrases, que des non-théologiens ne pourraient peut-être pas saisir immédiatement à cause de leur forme concise, mais où ils trouveraient, après une lecture attentive, une meilleure compréhension de la différence que comportent les relations de tout à partie dans l'organisme physique et moral. Il fallait expliquer alors comment le simple croyant était partie du Corps mystique du Christ, qu'est l'Eglise, et la différence entre cette relation et celle qui existe dans un organisme physique. Nous disions alors:

"Dum enim in naturali corpore unitatis principium ita partes iungit, ut propria, quam vocant, subsistentia singulae prorsus careant; contra in mystico Corpore mutuae coniunctionis vis, etiamsi intima, membra ita inter se copulat, ut singula omnino fruantur persona propria. Accedit quod, si totius et singulorum membrorum mutuam inter se rationem consideramus, in physico quolibet viventi corpore totius concretionis emolumento membra singula universa postremum unice destinantur, dum socialis quaelibet hominum compages, si modo ultimum utilitatis finem inspicimus, ad omnium et uniuscuiusque membri profectum, utpote personae sunt, postremum ordinantur."<sup>1</sup>

Nous revenons à Notre thème principal, l'appréciation morale de la transplantation de la cornée d'un mort sur un vivant, afin

<sup>1</sup> *Acta Ap. Sedis*, a. 35, pp. 221-2.

d'améliorer l'état des aveugles ou de ceux qui le deviennent ; à leur service se mettent aujourd'hui la charité et la pitié de beaucoup d'hommes compatissants, de même que les progrès de la technique et de la chirurgie scientifique, avec toutes leurs ressources inventives, leur audace et leur persévérance. La psychologie de l'aveugle nous permet de deviner son besoin d'une aide compatissante et comme il la reçoit avec reconnaissance.

L'évangile de Saint Luc contient une description vivante de la psychologie de l'aveugle, qui est un chef-d'œuvre. L'aveugle de Jéricho, entendant passer la foule, demanda ce que cela signifiait. On lui répondit que Jésus de Nazareth passait par là. Alors il s'écria : "Jésus, Fils de David, aie pitié de moi". Les gens lui enjoignirent de se taire, mais lui continuait de plus belle : "Fils de David, aie pitié de moi!". Jésus ordonna donc de le faire venir. "Que veux-tu que je te fasse?"—"Seigneur ! que je voie!"—"Vois ! Ta foi t'a sauvé". Et aussitôt il recouvra la vue et suivit Jésus en louant Dieu.<sup>1</sup> Ce cri "Seigneur, faites que je voie!" retentit aux oreilles et dans le cœur de tous ; aussi voulez-vous y répondre tous et prêter votre aide autant qu'il est en votre pouvoir. Vous Nous assurez que le transfert de la cornée constitue pour beaucoup de malades un moyen prometteur de guérison ou du moins d'adoucissement et d'amélioration. Eh bien ! utilisez-la et aidez-les dans la mesure où c'est possible et licite ; naturellement, en choisissant les cas avec beaucoup de discernement et de prudence.

La documentation, que vous Nous avez fournie, permet de se représenter en quelque sorte l'opération que vous effectuez. On peut exécuter l'enlèvement de la cornée de deux façons, dites-vous, soit par des "kératoplasties lamellaires" "cheratoplastiche lamellari" ; soit par des "kératoplasties perforantes" "cheratoplastiche perforanti". Si l'on observe soigneusement la technique requise, l'œil enlevé peut se conserver pendant 48 à 60 heures. Si plusieurs cliniques ne sont pas trop éloignées les unes des autres, elles peuvent ainsi constituer une certaine réserve de matériel prêt à l'usage, et se prêter secours mutuellement selon les besoins des cas particuliers. Nous trouvons aussi dans votre documentation des renseignements sur les indications de la transplantation de cornée en général, et sur ses possibilités de réussite. La majorité des aveugles, ou de ceux qui le deviennent, ne sont pas susceptibles d'en profiter. Vous mettez en garde contre les espoirs utopiques, en ce qui concerne le pronostic des cas opérables. Vous écrivez : "È bene che il pubblico sappia che non sono possibili trapianti di altri tessuti oculari e tanto meno dell'occhio intero nell'uomo, ma è solo possibile sosti-

<sup>1</sup> Luc. 18, 35-43.



tuire, e solo parzialmente, la porzione più anteriore dell'apparato diottrico oculare". Quant au succès de l'intervention, vous Nous apprenez que des 4360 cas publiés entre 1948 et 1954, 45 à 65% ont eu un résultat positif et que l'on rencontre un pourcentage semblable pour les cas non-publiés; vous ajoutez "Si è avuto un vantaggio rispetto alle condizioni precedenti"; dans 20% des cas seulement on aurait pu obtenir "una visione più o meno vicina alla normale". Vous signalez pour conclure que dans beaucoup de pays les lois et ordonnances de l'Etat ne permettent pas une utilisation plus large de la transplantation de la cornée et que, par conséquent, on ne peut pas aider un nombre plus grand d'aveugles ou de ceux qui perdent la vue. Voilà pour ce qui concerne le point de vue médical et technique de votre compétence.

Du point de vue moral et religieux, il n'y a rien à objecter à l'enlèvement de la cornée d'un cadavre, c'est-à-dire aux *kératoplasties* lamellaires aussi vien que perforantes, quand on les considère *en elles-mêmes*. Pour qui les reçoit, c'est-à-dire, le *patient*, elles représentent une restauration et la correction d'un défaut de naissance ou accidentel. A l'égard du défunt dont on enlève la cornée, on ne l'atteint dans aucun des *biens* auxquels il a droit, ni dans son *droit* à ces biens. Le cadavre n'est plus, au sens propre du mot, un sujet de droit; car il est privé de la personnalité qui seule peut être sujet de droit. L'extirpation n'est pas non plus l'enlèvement d'un *bien*; les organes visuels en effet (leur présence, leur intégrité) n'ont plus dans le cadavre le caractère de *biens*, parce qu'ils ne lui servant plus et n'ont plus de relation à aucune fin. Cela ne signifie pas du tout qu'à l'égard du cadavre d'un homme il ne pourrait y avoir, ou il n'y ait pas en fait, des obligations morales, des prescriptions ou des prohibitions; cela ne signifie pas non plus que les tiers, qui ont le soin du corps, de son intégrité et du traitement dont il sera l'objet, ne puissent céder, ou ne cèdent en fait, des droits et des devoirs proprement dits. Bien au contraire. Les *kératoplasties*, qui ne soulèvent en elles-mêmes aucune objection morale, peuvent aussi *par ailleurs* ne pas être irréprochables et même être directement immorales.

Il faut en premier lieu dénoncer un jugement moralement erroné, qui se forme dans l'esprit de l'homme, mais influence d'habitude son comportement externe et consiste à mettre le cadavre humain sur le même plan que celui de l'animal ou qu'une simple "chose". Le cadavre animal est utilisable presque dans toutes ses parties; on peut en dire autant du cadavre humain considéré de façon purement matérielle, c'est-à-dire dans les éléments dont il se compose. Pour certains, cette manière de voir constitue le critère

dernier de la pensée et le principe dernier de l'action. Une telle attitude comporte une erreur de jugement et une méconnaissance de la psychologie et du sens religieux et moral. Car le cadavre humain mérite qu'on le regarde tout autrement. Le corps était la demeure d'une âme spirituelle et immortelle, partie constitutive essentielle d'une personne humaine dont il partageait la dignité; quelque chose de cette dignité s'attache encore à lui. On peut dire aussi, puisqu'il est une composante de l'homme, qu'il a été formé "à l'image et à la ressemblance" de Dieu, laquelle va bien au delà des traces génériques de la ressemblance divine, qu'on retrouve également chez les animaux privés d'intelligence et jusque dans les créatures inanimées purement matérielles. Même au cadavre s'applique d'une certaine manière le mot de l'Apôtre: "Ne savez-vous pas que vos membres sont le temple du St-Esprit, qui habite en vous?"<sup>1</sup> Enfin le corps mort est destiné à la résurrection et à la vie éternelle. Tout cela ne vaut pas du corps animal et prouve qu'il ne suffit pas d'envisager des "fins thérapeutiques" pour juger et traiter convenablement le cadavre humain. D'autre part, il est vrai également que la science médicale et la formation des futurs médecins exigent une connaissance détaillée du corps humain et qu'on a besoin du cadavre comme objet d'étude. Les réflexions émises ci-dessus ne s'y opposent pas. On peut poursuivre cette fin légitime en acceptant pleinement ce que Nous venons de dire. De là vient aussi qu'un individu veuille disposer de son cadavre et le destiner à des fins utiles, moralement irréprochables et même élevées (entre autres pour secourir des hommes malades et souffrants). On peut prendre une telle décision au sujet de son propre corps avec la pleine conscience du respect qui lui revient, et en tenant compte des paroles que l'Apôtre adressait aux Corinthiens. Cette décision il ne faut pas la condamner, mais la justifier positivement. Pensez par exemple au geste de Don Carlo Gnocchi. A moins que les circonstances n'imposent une obligation, il faut respecter la liberté et la spontanéité des intéressés; d'habitude on ne présentera pas la chose comme un *devoir* ou un acte de charité obligatoire. Dans la propagande, il faut certainement observer une réserve intelligente pour éviter de sérieux conflits extérieurs et intérieurs. Faul-il en outre, comme il arrive souvent, refuser en principe tout dédommagement? La question reste posée. Il est hors de doute que de graves abus peuvent s'introduire, si l'on exige une rétribution; mais ce serait aller trop loin que de juger immorale toute acceptation ou toute exigence d'un dédommagement. Le cas est analogue à celui de la transfusion sanguine: c'est un mérite pour le donneur de refuser un

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. vi, 19.

dédommagement; ce n'est pas nécessairement un défaut de l'accepter.

L'enlèvement de la cornée, même parfaitement licite en soi, peut aussi devenir illicite, s'il viole les droits et les sentiments des tiers à qui incombe le soin du cadavre, les proches parents d'abord; mais ce pourraient être d'autres personnes en vertu de droits publics ou privés. Il ne serait pas humain, pour servir les intérêts de la médecine ou des "buts thérapeuthiques", d'ignorer des sentiments si profonds. En général, il ne devrait pas être permis aux médecins d'entreprendre des extirpations ou d'autres interventions sur un cadavre sans l'accord de ceux qui en sont chargés, et peut-être même en dépit des objections formulées antérieurement par l'intéressé. Il ne serait pas non plus équitable que les corps des patients pauvres dans les cliniques publiques et les hôpitaux soient destinés d'office aux services de médecine et de chirurgie, tandis que ceux des patients plus fortunés ne le seraient pas. L'argent et la situation sociale ne devraient pas intervenir, quand il s'agit de ménager des sentiments humains aussi délicats. D'autre part, il faut éduquer le public et lui expliquer avec intelligence et respect que consentir expressément ou tacitement à des atteintes sérieuses à l'intégrité du cadavre dans l'intérêt de ceux qui souffrent, n'offense pas la piété due au défunt, lorsqu'on a pour cela des raisons valables. Ce consentement peut malgré tout comporter pour les proches parents une souffrance et un sacrifice, mais ce sacrifice s'auréole de charité miséricordieuse envers des frères souffrants.

Les *pouvoirs publics* et les lois qui concernent les interventions sur les cadavres doivent en général respecter les mêmes considérations morales et humaines, puisqu'elles s'appuient sur la nature humaine elle-même, laquelle précède la société dans l'ordre de la causalité et de la dignité. En particulier les pouvoirs publics ont le devoir de veiller à leur mise en pratique, et d'abord de prendre des mesures pour qu'un "cadavre" ne soit pas considéré et traité comme tel avant que la mort n'ait été dûment constatée. Par contre les pouvoirs publics sont compétents pour veiller aux intérêts légitimes de la médecine et de la formation médicale; si l'on soupçonne que la mort est due à une cause criminelle, ou s'il y a danger pour la santé publique, il faut que le corps soit livré aux autorités. Tout cela peut et doit se faire, sans manquer au respect dû au cadavre humain et aux droits des proches parents. Les pouvoirs publics peuvent enfin contribuer efficacement à faire entrer dans l'opinion la conviction de la nécessité et de la licéité morale de certaines dispositions au sujet des cadavres, et ainsi prévenir ou écarter l'occasion de conflits intérieurs et extérieurs dans l'individu, la famille et la société.

Il y a presque deux ans, le 30 septembre 1954, Nous avons déjà exprimé les mêmes idées dans une allocution au 8<sup>e</sup> Congrès de l'Association Médicale Internationale, et Nous voudrions maintenant répéter et confirmer ce que Nous disions alors dans un bref paragraphe: "En ce qui concerne l'enlèvement de parties du corps d'un défunt à des fins thérapeutiques, on ne peut pas permettre au médecin de traiter le cadavre comme il le veut. Il revient à l'autorité publique d'établir des règles convenables. Mais elle non plus ne peut procéder arbitrairement. Il y a des textes de loi, contre lesquels on peut élever de sérieuses objections. Une norme, comme celle qui permet au médecin, dans un sanatorium, de prélever des parties du corps à des fins thérapeutiques, tout esprit de lucre étant exclu, n'est pas admissible déjà en raison de la possibilité de l'interpréter trop librement. Il faut aussi prendre en considération les droits et les devoirs de ceux à qui incombe la charge du corps du défunt. Finalement, il faut respecter les exigences de la morale naturelle, qui défend de considérer et de traiter le cadavre de l'homme simplement comme une chose ou comme celui d'un animal".

Avec l'espoir de vous avoir ainsi donné une orientation plus précise et facilité une compréhension plus profonde des aspects religieux et moraux de ce sujet, Nous vous accordons de tout cœur Notre Bénédiction Apostolique.

---

### BOOK REVIEWS

*Irish Journey.* By Halliday Sutherland. (Geoffrey Bles. 15s.)

As a celebrity, whose entertaining books of travel and of reminiscence have been widely read, Dr Halliday Sutherland has acquired the habit of demanding information with an air of authority, which does not always provoke a deferential response. His recent travels in Ireland appear to have been partly for relaxation, and partly to investigate the reasons why Irish Catholic girls are alleged to form a large proportion of the unmarried mothers in English Catholic rescue homes. In Eire, Dr Sutherland proclaims with a patronizing air, "too many people, including clerics, regard ignorance as synonymous with innocence. These persons should enquire how many Children of Mary from Eire are now prostitutes in Piccadilly". He appears to have adopted this lordly tone, rather rashly, in conversation with the Bishop of Galway when he asked permission to

inspect the Magdalen Home there. His lordship is a vigorous and highly trained pastor, who was unimpressed either by Dr Sutherland's opinions on theology or by his superficial acquaintance with Irish social conditions.

The figures which Dr Sutherland quotes from the annual reports of the Crusade of Rescue are certainly alarming, and they show that a real problem exists. But Dr Sutherland gives none of the data which might supply perspective for considering it. How far do the Irish girls who come to England in difficulties flock to London or to other well-known rescue societies? What is the proportion of these unfortunate girls to the total number of female immigrants during recent years? Dr Sutherland simply puts forward the thesis that if an Irish girl, living in the country, is known to be expecting an illegitimate child, she is at once compelled by her family, with encouragement from the local clergy, to go to England and have the baby there. Mother and child thus become a liability to the Catholic rescue societies in England. But Dr Sutherland always gives the impression of overstating his case; and he relies invariably upon anecdotes, which he can tell remarkably well. The anecdote is intended to illustrate general conditions, but it may not be at all typical; and there is no reason to believe that Dr Sutherland has any real idea whether it is typical or not. The important statistics which he quotes on page 85 contradict themselves in several places; and the totals are not even added up correctly.

This incoherent patchwork of a book contains many good stories, and Dr Sutherland tells them as well as ever. The most amusing and most convincing, to my mind, are those which concern the ship's captain, living in retirement in Cork harbour, who reveals some fascinating details about the habits and tricks of stowaways. The captain dies suddenly and is buried with full honours at sea; whereupon Dr Sutherland is informed that he never had been a naval man at all, but was a rich man who had contrived to live in a world of illusions which he made real. That generally is the impression that Ireland seems to have left upon Dr Sutherland, either now, or in his previous visits between the two world wars, or as a medical student early in the century. He was certainly presented with an excellent real story at Mallow last year, when he was violently assaulted by a drunken young bully in a hotel. He gets full value out of the libel action brought against a London Sunday newspaper by the old Canon of Doneraile, for publishing an article by Miss Honor Tracy; and also out of the subsequent libel action which she brought successfully against the same Sunday paper for having doubted her veracity.

The whole book has a farcical tone, which makes for light reading rather than serious comment. Dr Sutherland's acquaintance with Ireland is at all times superficial. Even when he takes trouble to give details, he can make mistakes on a scale which shakes all confidence in his judgement. He met various prominent people, and he explains who some of them are, to give background to his story. For instance, he describes a meeting with the present Minister for Defence, General MacEoin. He explains that MacEoin was due for execution, together with de Valera, after the rising of 1916, but that Asquith personally intervened to save them both, as the result of a letter from Tom Kettle, who was then on active service in France. The truth is that MacEoin was too young to have taken part in the Easter Rising of 1916, but was, in fact, reprieved in 1921, at the insistence of Michael Collins during the truce negotiations of that year. Asquith did sanction the reprieve of de Valera in 1916 as an American citizen. But that happened under immediate pressure from John Redmond in London, before Tom Kettle, who had not yet gone to France, had any reliable information of what was occurring in Dublin.

D. G.

*Moral Judgment.* By D. Daiches Raphael. Pp. 224. (George Allen & Unwin, London. 16s.)

IN a closely argued and well written book Dr Raphael deals with two of the fundamental themes of moral philosophy: the criterion of right action and what constitutes properly a moral judgement. In the controversy between the utilitarians and their opponents he sides with the latter, in particular with modern English "deontologists" like Pritchard, Carritt and Ross who, in his opinion, are much closer to the ethical facts of experience than the utilitarians. His own attitude he would probably describe as Phenomenalism—in one passage he suggests that one need not advance beyond the position of an agnostic phenomenalist, though in a discussion of the claims of Ethics and Science he produces an ingenious version of the moral argument for the existence of God. He is emphatic that moral obligation cannot be reduced to non-moral elements and moral action cannot be fully interpreted in terms of personal or social utility. Throughout one is conscious of the influence of Kant and Dr Raphael's final explanation of moral judgement is given in a Kantian form modified by the more personalist thought of Martin Buber and, though his name is not mentioned, Gabriel Marcel.

The two basic ethical terms are the "ought" and the good. He will not admit, with G. E. Moore, that both can be reduced to the

good. The "ought" is paramount, as one would expect from the Kantian tradition. The good is later made equivalent to the "fitting" on the lines of the doctrine of Ewing. His analysis of ethical terms is good and on the whole acceptable, if at times rather negative. His definition of right is elusive. "I have a right to do an action" means merely that "I have no duty to refrain from so acting". In this sense "I have a right" asserts a *nihil obstat* for a proposed course of action. But is not this extremely negative? Must we not speak of rights as vested in a person positively and because he is a person? This interpretation touches the exercise rather than the possession of such a right. His theory of morality supposes that we can be moral only in relationship with others and that strictly speaking we have no moral obligations towards ourselves. "If a man is imprudent, we call him a fool but not a knave." But again, is this not unduly to limit obligations? Have we no moral duty to restrain and to develop ourselves? He does not consider duties to God as falling within the sphere of morals. Presumably he regards them as religious.

His treatment of equality is interesting. He admits an equality of consideration for men must always be treated as ends-in-themselves and never merely as instruments, for that would be to degrade them below the ethical level. There is also an equality of opportunity, but this is conceived as the opportunity to develop abilities which actually do exist and not as a formal egalitarianism. With regard to distribution he notes that claims to equality in this respect have frequently been protests against inequalities, against the ground of unfair differentiation. In addition, men have the general feeling that they are obliged to do something for the sick and mentally unstable, to redress the natural balance that has been tilted in their disfavour. This involves a distribution not in accordance with merit or social usefulness but in contradiction of them. Justice would therefore appear to embrace a basic minimum of equal satisfactions, unrelated to capacity or social utility.

When he comes to analyse the moral judgement, he relies on a personal approach. Moral action, in his opinion, is the right personal approach to others, and more generally to society. It is based upon an imaginative awareness of the feelings and desires of other people. A sympathetic awareness is thus the condition for ethical behaviour. Need is a potential claim upon a potential agent who has the obligation to help satisfy that need. There are no such things as "real" obligations apart from people's thoughts. This seems to me a dangerous and at the same time a superficial theory that plays all too lightly on the surface of human relationships, recognizing no basis of duty rooted in the very nature of man and making it



extremely difficult to have general objective standards of human behaviour.

Men are able to be moral persons—he writes—in virtue of the joint possession of three kinds of capacity. First, they are conscious of their own conative-affective tendencies; second, they can enter, in sympathetic imagination, into the similar experiences of others; and third, they can help each other to satisfy their interests (p. 113).

But—one must enquire—who is to judge which of these conative-affective tendencies should be encouraged and assisted? Clearly, not every one of them, or we are back to a doctrine of altruistic Hedonism. There must then exist a further criterion to distinguish between them, precisely in their moral reference.

The emphasis here set on the personal attitude towards others is admirable and in keeping with much modern thinking, e.g. that of Scheler, Bergson and Marcel, as also with the I-Thou thesis of Martin Buber to whom the author refers explicitly. But it could be argued that what he is trying to formulate in ethical language is not so much morality as love or friendship and that the two are very different, or again, that he is reducing to philosophical terms the second Christian commandment of the love of our neighbour. And so the note of obligation is lost in a mood of affectionate sympathy, and the moral imperative, which after all is the primal fact of ethics, gives way to fellow feeling which is by no means an equivalent. Besides, is all human relationship, however casual and for the sake of mutual convenience, to be expressed in inter-personal language? Granted, human beings should never be regarded merely as instruments because they enjoy a personal dignity, but in so many instances we are surely just "instrumental" to one another. Even Martin Buber supposes that the I-Thou association can be rarely achieved and never for long. Yet these transient contacts on the level of convenience are subject to the moral principles of truth and honesty.

Elsewhere Dr Raphael approaches somewhat nearer to the traditional and scholastic position. He asks himself why human behaviour tends to follow highly regular patterns. The reason he alleges is that human beings, when they act deliberately, are fairly *consistent*. "They set up rules or principles of action for themselves, or accept such rules from others, and for the most part they stick to these rules." This, he continues, is part of what we mean by saying they are *rational*. And so, tangentially he is agreeing that morality



has ultimately to be based upon man's nature as rational and responsible. In this case, only rational responses to the conative-affective tendencies of others may be considered ethical and proper. But we have now established another and a more fundamental standard of the rightness and wrongness of human acts.

In a concluding chapter the author examines the claims of Science and Ethics. In no meekly apologetic mood he points out that there exists no real contradiction between man's psychological experience of causality in his free decisions and the supposed "causal patterns" of the scientist. The scientist is not talking about real "causes" but only about an observed regularity of sequence. The language of science deals with events as falling under regular classes, while the speech of every-day life describes certain actions as caused. These are two different points of view and there is no conflict between them. What seems problematic to the author is not the explanation why deliberate human actions are fairly regular but why events in the material world are apparently completely regular. This cannot be by accident or chance but it suggests rational activity behind them, in other words at least the likelihood of an existent God.

*Writings of Edith Stein.* Edited and translated by Hilda Graef. Pp. 206. (Peter Owen, London, 1956. 21s.)

LAST year I reviewed in these pages Dr Graef's biography of Edith Stein, *The Scholar and the Cross*. This I was very happy to do as I had met Dr Stein on more than one occasion in Germany, and greatly admired the blend of intellectual insight and religious spirit that was so patent in her. She was a remarkable person, in the first place as one of the very few women who have achieved philosophical distinction in Germany and even more as one of the great "converts" of our time. She came to the Church from a background of traditional Jewish faith and customs across the wide plain of disbelief to become, first, an outstanding Catholic laywoman of marked piety and devotion and then a nun in Carmel. She died a victim of Nazi brutality in the camp at Auschwitz.

Her principal writings have been published in German, in two large volumes, and Dr Graef tells us that an English translation is being prepared in the United States. The first of these is *Endliches und Ewiges Sein*, Finite and Eternal Being. It is a product of her early years in Carmel when at the wish of her religious superiors she devoted some of her time to philosophy. She makes in it a brave attempt to reconcile the thought of St Thomas with the modern methods of Phenomenology in which she was trained at Göttingen and Freiburg under Edmund Husserl. But her interest in scholastic

philosophy dated back several years, and she had already published the first German version of St Thomas's *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*. The second of these larger volumes was unfinished at her death and was being prepared in honour of the fourth centenary of the death of St John of the Cross in 1942. Its title is appropriate, not only to the saint who is its subject but to its authoress, namely *Kreuzwissenschaft*, the wisdom of the cross. As a Jewess, Edith Stein—Sister Benedicta as she was now called in Carmel—felt it her special mission to share in spirit the sufferings of her own people as she was later to share them in grim effect.

Dr Graef does not reproduce much from these larger volumes. Instead we are given a number of papers and addresses. They include three directly spiritual chapters: the first, on *The Mystery of Christmas*, short and straightforward; the second, which traces the influence of the Old Testament on the Church's liturgy, *The Prayer of the Church*—Edith Stein was acutely conscious of the continuity between the two Testaments; and a third, a charming study of St Elizabeth of Hungary, written when Dr Stein was teaching at a Women's Institute in Münster.

These are followed by a longer section devoted to the symbolic theology associated with Dionysius "the Areopagite". It may cause surprise—the writer says—that she should place this tradition of Dionysius side by side with those of Aristotle and St Augustine but she contends that it dominated certain aspects of Christian thought from the ninth to the sixteenth century. In this, the longest section of the book, she also examines the character of Natural Theology and the relation between faith and reason.

A third portion includes chapters on educational subjects, especially upon the problems of the education of women. Dr Stein often addressed meetings on these topics, treating the subject at a fundamental level in a way which revealed both her phenomenological and her scriptural approach. And, finally, we have an English version of a philosophical essay composed before she was received into the Church, on the philosophical bases of psychology. This is by no means easy reading. It is useful to have these selections available in English, but it must be remembered that they are not fully representative of Edith Stein's work. The translation has been done competently.

J. M.

*Shrines to our Lady Around the World.* By Zsolt Aradi. Pp. xiii + 213. (Macmillan & Co., London, 1954. 30s.)

THIS book, published in the United States, deals with some of the

most famous shrines of our Lady, giving the history of the origin of each, and a photo of the place where it is and of the image it contains. The account begins with some of the shrines of our Lady's homeland, Palestine, then deals with the most ancient shrines—beginning with the oldest image of our Lady in the catacomb of Priscilla, Rome, which is thought to date from about 170. The author then takes the reader to shrines, more modern ones, not only in Europe, but also in Africa, Asia and America (South and North). Sections that particularly attract attention concern the shrines of Rome, those of Russia, and the most modern shrines, those of our own day in Fatima, Beauraing and Syracuse. Of special interest to readers in the British Isles are the accounts of shrines in England, beginning with the most famous, Walsingham, and of Knock in Ireland. Irish readers will read with pleasure the story of the Irish Madonna, which was taken to Győr in Hungary by Bishop Lynch of Clonfert, when driven from his country in 1652 by the Cromwellian persecution, and has ever since been honoured in that country, now undergoing its own period of suffering for its fidelity to the Church of Christ.

This book is full of interesting matter, but it is a pity that its author did not distinguish more clearly, in his history of these famous shrines, what is well authenticated from what is merely legendary. The production of the book is faultless (apart from the irritating practice of frequently omitting page numbers for appearance sake) and the photographs are excellent.

*Master Alcuin, Liturgist.* By Rev. Gerald Ellard, S.J., Ph.D. Pp. xi + 266. (Loyda University Press, Chicago, 1956. \$4.00.)

THIS is a most fascinating book; a full study of one of the most interesting persons in liturgical history. For a reader who is a student of such matters this book is a kind of liturgical "who dun it?", a well-told detective story, tracing the doings of the Anglo-Saxon—theologian, biblical scholar, educator, statesman, administrator, poet, spiritual guide, eminent liturgist—who became the chief instrument of the emperor Charlemagne's "liturgical movement".

It tells the strange tale, too, of the extraordinary evolution of the Roman rite by which a Roman Sacramentary—the "Hadrianum", dispatched about 785 by Pope Adrian I to the king of the Franks—sent to France to Romanize the Gallican liturgy, was itself influenced, modified and augmented by that liturgy, and the amalgam produced a new rite. Later, in the tenth and eleventh centuries—chiefly through the expeditions to Rome of the German emperor but also through the Cluny movement—this Roman-Frankish

liturgy flowed back from the north towards Rome, was accepted by the Holy See, and later—after further development—prescribed for the whole Western Church.

Of particular interest in the story is what we learn of all we owe to Alcuin—the deacon who ended his life as abbot of the great abbey of S. Martin at Tours—in our present rite. It is the Canon of the Mass as arranged by Alcuin that is ours now. To him we owe many of our votive Masses and occasional prayers; his are the two prayers in the Order of Mass immediately after *Agnus Dei*; the recitation of the Creed in the Mass (derived from an Irish usage of the sixth and seventh centuries) is, in the first instance (outside Rome), due to Alcuin. He had much to do with our present liturgy of the dead; to him we are indebted for the lovely feast of All Saints; and he seems to have been the originator of the dedication of Saturday to our Lady's honour.

Incidentally, Fr Ellard gives us the most up-to-date information about the manuscripts of the early sacramentaries; and, as one would expect from a liturgist of his eminence, his book is fully documented, has an exhaustive index, and an excellent bibliography. A most attractive book, not to be taken up except one can find some hours of leisure, for once begun it is very difficult to lay it down.

J. B. O'C.

*The First Jesuit.* By Mary Purcell. (M. H. Gill, 1956. 21s.)

It was right that in this fourth-centenary year many books should appear about St Ignatius, especially as in English there has been little that disinterred him from beneath the mass of edifying comment (if not of sheer invention) under which he lay only a little less deep than St Francis Xavier. Now that possibly all the authentic documents have been published there is almost too much genuine material available and Mary Purcell has wanted to pack in all that she could. She has not been able to consult Fr Brodrick's *Pilgrim Years*, nor we, to compare the two books; but while the latter is clearly a "first part", we wish that the former could have been published in two volumes. Not only is Iñigo's youth not whitewashed—in 1515 he and his brother (a priest) were charged with "crimes of enormity" during Carnival: he got himself lodged in the bishop's gaol as having been tonsured, though he probably was not—but he was definitely a *mediaeval* and to my mind always was so: I doubt if he would ever have "understood" either the pagan renaissance or the Protestant revolution, but he could entrust the necessary work to men who did. Therefore, if one "hinge" in his life was his experience at Manresa, so (as Miss Purcell makes clear) his experience

at La Storta in 1537 made a new and indelible impression on, or "change in", his soul: this perception that The Father placed him with His Son, however it is to be interpreted, was for him an "absolute". Perhaps the author might have stressed, even more than she does, the mystical prayer by which the Saint lived, if only to correct any impression of a sort of religious rationalism which has been thought to have been his: on the other side, we are glad to be reminded that he might send for music to cheer him up; that he was amused by mimicry; that he would be given roasted chestnuts to remind him of Basque-land (and St Francis Borgia kept him informed about his donkey that he had left behind, which had grown fat, and was not excluded even from the garden). St Ignatius may even now remain enigmatic, and that may be, because while he was a fully "integrated man", there were so many psychological "levels" (so to call them) at which he lived.

C. C. M.

---

## CORRESPONDENCE

### VIRGINITAS IN PARTU

(THE CLERGY REVIEW, September 1956, pp. 545-6)

"Scotus" writes:

I read with astonishment, and with growing annoyance and concern, Father Davis's "Note" on *virginitas in partu*. First there is the assumption that men like Ambrose, Augustine, Martin I, the Fathers of Ephesus, St Thomas Aquinas, would never have taught the Miraculous Birth, if they had known of accidental *laesio* of the hymen, freak intercourse, and the required muscular efforts *parturientis*. Then Father Davis cannot see the relevance, nowadays, of the Miraculous Birth. Isn't it a matter of our Lady's corporal integrity and of her unique dignity as the *Virgo Virginum*? But by far the most dangerous feature of the whole paragraph is the presumption contained in the word "re-interpretation": "We'll show you the real meaning of *virginitas in partu*—a meaning missed through lack of knowledge by the Fathers and the whole Catholic Tradition". A similar aim led Jansenius to discover the *real* meaning of St Augustine's doctrine on grace.

Father Davis replies:

Alas! the chronicler's lot is not a happy one. I simply reported with brief comments the beginnings of what might become an important discussion, and I am attacked as one who undermines the dogmas of the faith. I thought it was reasonably clear that, while finding there was something to be said for Mitterer's suggestion, I did not make it my own. Perhaps some further remarks will clarify my position.

"Scotus" emphasizes the witness of tradition. I am well aware of its force. Although I have not seen Mitterer's book itself (*Dogma und Biologie der heiligen Familie*, Wien, 1952), the reviews indicate that he does not attempt the re-examination of tradition; he is content to offer the problem to the positive theologians for their consideration. As far as I know, these worthy men have not yet responded. Hence I remarked: "the re-interpretation of tradition involved is at the moment but an unsupported wish", and I went on to hint that it was hardly suitable to admit "such tentative questionings" into a student's manual of theology. A chronicler cannot anticipate the results of a detailed enquiry, and he should not be expected to give on the spot a categorical pronouncement. I did not feel it necessary to point out that such a long tradition will not be easily re-interpreted.

But "Scotus" is indignant that I should admit even the remote possibility of a "re-interpretation"; he assumes that such an attitude is radically unsound. Now there can never be a re-interpretation of tradition in the sense of making a truth of faith change its meaning; the re-interpretation is always the separation of the revealed truth from accidental elements that have been associated with the truth in the past but are now seen as due to a passing historical context. Needless to say, such a separation of the essential from the accidental, the unchanging from the changing, must always be done under the guidance of the Church. How might the principle apply to the present problem? Mary's perpetual physical virginity is beyond all doubt a dogma of our faith; in other words, Mary's body always was and remains the body of a virgin. It was therefore not impaired by the birth of Christ; that is the truth known as the *virginitas in partu*. But what is implied in the concept of physical virginity? Does it imply an unbroken hymen, and consequently demand a miraculous process of birth for Christ? Or can we say that this idea is an accidental element in tradition, coming from the notions current at the time but without permanent value? If so, one could hold firm the dogma of Mary's perpetual virginity, while denying a miraculous mode of birth for Christ. Such would be the

line of separation between the unchanging dogma and its changing associations. All this is hypothesis, and it must be tested by a loyal examination of the texts. A difficulty indeed comes to mind even before these are examined. The re-interpretation seems to make the assertion of *virginitas in partu* meaningless. This is not because it denies that Mary remained a virgin during the birth, but because, on this view, the birth *could* not have affected the virginity, and it becomes quite pointless for the Church to affirm that it *did* not. I am under no illusion about the difficulties that anyone who tries to follow up Mitterer's suggestion will have to face, but to allow the possibility of an investigation is in no way unsound.

I am also taken to task because I "cannot see the relevance, nowadays, of the Miraculous Birth". That is not quite what I said. I wrote: "nowadays we find it peculiarly difficult to see the relevance of *virginitas in partu* as usually explained". To find a point difficult is not the same as to be unable to see it at all, nor is it to doubt or deny it. Having been questioned by a number of priests on this subject, I simply stated the fact, as it appeared to me, that we do find a difficulty here. That my experience has not been entirely unusual is shown by these words of the Abbé Laurentin, one of the foremost Mariologists of the present day: "De tous les points de la doctrine mariale, c'est le plus méconnu. L'Auteur de la présente synthèse sait par expérience la difficulté qu'il peut y avoir à l'assimiler, mais aussi les lumières qu'apporte cette découverte" (*Court traité de théologie mariale*, Paris, 1954, p. 86). He goes on to discuss the sources of this difficulty, and he gives some helpful remarks on the doctrine. The main reason which led me to admit all the same that "in many ways Mitterer's ideas are very attractive" is that his argument that physical motherhood seems to require the active co-operation of the mother in the bringing forth of her child is not without force.

May I then re-assure "Scotus"? I did not deny the traditional explanation of Mary's virginity nor its consequence, the miraculous birth. Mitterer's theory has not yet sufficient theological basis to justify an assent. It remains, however, an interesting suggestion that I would like to see more thoroughly examined.

The Rev. W. G. Ford writes:

"No sooner was He conceived than she began to abdicate her maternal rights," says G. D. Smith (*Mary's Part in Our Redemption*, p. 71). If there is a sense of completeness achieved by the mother in the natural birth of a child, *virginitas in partu*, revealed to Mary beforehand and freely accepted by her, would mean that she



gave up part, at least, of the joys of motherhood. This would be in line with her work as Co-Redemptrix, and such an interpretation would preserve the traditional view of the meaning of *virginitas in partu* without any suggestion that it was held because of the inadequacy of natural science in earlier days.

#### THE CULPABILITY OF CHILDREN

(THE CLERGY REVIEW, June 1956, p. 356)

Dr McReavy replies:

"Parochus" wants to know how I would justify my assumption, indeed assertion, "that some positive law of the Church commands Mass-attendance under grave sin", which he finds "not self-evident by any means" (THE CLERGY REVIEW, August 1956, p. 512). I would simply refer him to two canons of the Code. Canon 6, 2°, tells us that "canons which completely repeat the old law are to be estimated from the authority of the old law, and therefore from the interpretations accepted among approved authors". Now, canon 1248 ("Festis de praecepto diebus Missa audienda est") is a mere paraphrase of the statute of the Council of Agde (A.D. 506) which Gratian enshrined in his *Decretum* (c. 64, D.I., *de consecratione*: "Missas die dominico saecularibus totas audire speciali ordine praecipimus") and which came to be accepted as expressing the common law of the Church. If "Parochus" learnt his catechism before 1918, he will recall that this obligation was then universally interpreted as binding under grave sin; indeed Innocent XI condemned the proposition (n. 52) that the precept of observing feasts did not bind under mortal sin, and he was certainly not referring merely to the obligation of repose. It follows, therefore, that the precept of canon 1248 binds with equal force.

It is perhaps worth adding that the Code normally leaves us to discern the force of its grave obligations in this way, e.g. those of fasting and abstinence (can. 1252), annual confession (can. 906) and paschal communion (can. 859).

#### PERMISSU SUPERIORUM



e in  
ion  
*uitas*  
the

ion,  
nds  
lent  
) . I  
tells  
be  
the  
non  
ere  
nich  
ssas  
us")  
the  
will  
ling  
tion  
nder  
iga-  
248

s to  
e of  
and

ed for  
I, in